THE UK'S BIGGEST REGIONAL LGBTQ+ LIFESTYLE MAGAZINE

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MIDLANDS ZONE

FEBRUARY 2019 ISSUE 262

VALENTINE'S GAY
LOVE IS IN THE AIR

Should Birmingham add brown and black to the Pride flag?

CAMPAIGN TO SAVE Birmingham Gay Village

+

GAY SCENE PICTURES + WHAT'S ON

TOP 5 FINALISTS revealed inside...

MIDLANDS ZONE Readers' Awards 2019

LET'S TALK Female Drag
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43 NEW SCENE GUIDE!

BIRMINGHAM GAY VILLAGE
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Have ya heard?

Human League live at Brum Pride

Iconic synth-pop trio The Human League will perform at Birmingham Pride in May, headlining the festival's Sunday night line-up.

The internationally renowned '80s stars, whose distinctive electro-pop sound has earned them an army of adoring fans, are best known for their smash-hit single, Don't You Want Me, and have sold more than 20 million records worldwide. Other hits include Mirror Man, Louise and Electric Dreams.

This year's Pride festival takes the theme Love Out Loud and is being held on Sat 25 and Sun 26 May. Tickets are available from **birminghampride.com.**

Another Birmingham gay venue to close!

A Birmingham gay venue will close its doors next month when its owners retire.

The Wellington shuts up shop on Saturday 16 March.

One of the owners, Paul Cueson-Speck, told Zone: "We've been here for the last 25 years, and it's now time to hang up the pub keys. It's the end of the lease, and so Ken Turner and my partner and I wish to retire - it's the end of an era."

The 16 March leaving party will feature Champagne Shirley. You'll all be missed!

Trans MURDER in Worcester

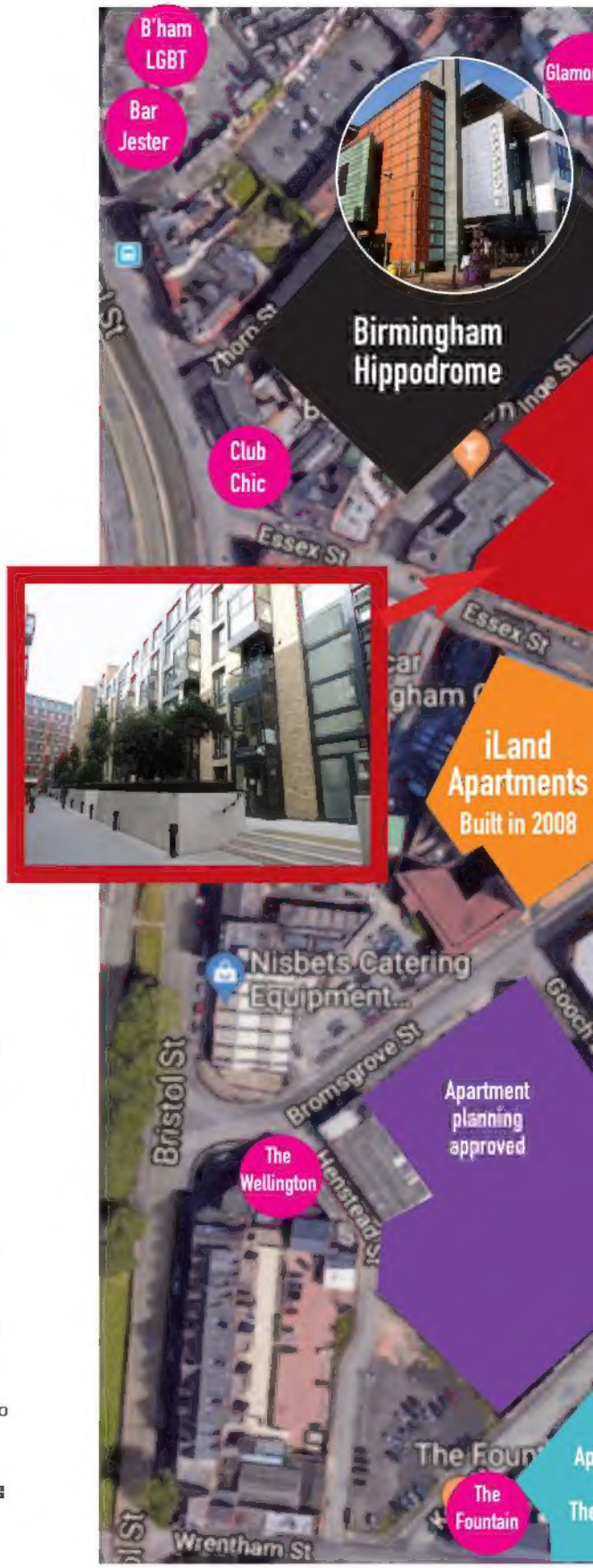
A man has been charged with the murder of a transgender woman in Worcester.

Amy Griffiths, 51, was found dead last month (14 January) at her flat in the city. West Mercia Police said that she had suffered throat and head injuries.

Local newspaper Worcester News reports that Martin Saberi, 53, has been charged with murdering the transgender woman and has appeared at Worcester Crown Court.

Come together and join the...

SAVE BIRMINGHAM GAY VILLAGE CAMPAIGN



OUR GAY VILLAGE IS UNDER THREAT!

If you are a recent visitor to Hurst Street and the surrounding areas within the Southside district, you will have noticed that it is currently subject to major residential development.

Car parks in close proximity to well-known LGBTQ+ businesses are being purchased by property developers for demolition and development into new residential apartment blocks.

Redevelopment should and must be supported for the continued regeneration of the area - but NOT if the cost is the destruction of Birmingham Gay Village's cultural heritage, which has been developed over the last 50 years.

Progress and change is good if it is considered, sympathetic to people's needs and takes into account the needs of ALL the communities that use the area.

So please read the next few pages and then hopefully LIKE our new Facebook page for SAVE THE BIRMINGHAM GAY VILLAGE CAMPAIGN

Arcadian Centre
Built in 1980s
Southside Apartments
Built in 2005
Missing
Lattitude Apartments
Built in 2009
New Apartments under construction
75% SOLD!
GALLIARD APSLEY
The Loft
Apartment planning approved
Apartment planning approved
Sidewalk
Nightingale
New Proposed Apartments
Village Inn
The Fox
Could this land be next for apartment development?
Could this land be next for apartment development?
Could this land be next for apartment development?
Could this land be next for apartment development?
Eden
Eden
Boltz Club
The Core
Hurst St
Bromsgrove St
Claybrook St
Pershore St
Skinner Ln
Sherlock St
Lower Essex St
Keyhunter

Partied hard?
Why not make getting a sexual health check-up a New Year's resolution.
We're open 7 days a week
offering sexual health testing and much more.
Birmingham LGBT's Sexual Health Services Team
wish everyone a Happy New Year.
www.blgbt.org/sexual-health
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Birmingham LGBT
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Get tested from home for STIs including HIV.
Order your free kit now: umbrellahealth.co.uk/testing

THE FIGHT GOES ON!

SAVE BIRMINGHAM GAY VILLAGE CAMPAIGN

Birmingham City Council held a planning committee meeting in December where a decision on the future of a planning application within the Birmingham Gay Village was deferred, despite having been recommended for planning permission approval.

The session was packed with members from the local LGBTQ community, along with concerned venue owners. Together they objected to the most recent planning application arguing plans could threaten the future of LGBTQ+ spaces and businesses in the city's Gay Village.

The planning application is for the demolition of existing buildings, including Amusement 13 (formally DV8), to provide 116 new residential apartments in a 9-12 storey building.

Pictures: A jam-packed turnout by the Birmingham LGBTQ+ community to object to the planning committee members of Birmingham City Council

A deferred decision on the planning application will stand until the planning committee have investigated further the historical and cultural impact of the Birmingham Gay Village in relation to future apartment developments.

Following a nighttime site visit on Saturday 26 January, city planners will revisit the Gay Village on Thursday 7 February for a daytime inspection.

The LGBTQ+ community have used the area around Hurst Street for in excess of 50 years. It's the LGBTQ's safe space and is the lifeblood and heart of the community. We should refuse to be marginalised or pushed out.

SAVE BIRMINGHAM GAY VILLAGE CAMPAIGN

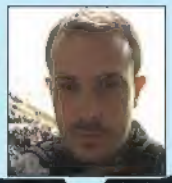
JOIN THE SAVE THE BIRMINGHAM GAY VILLAGE CAMPAIGN ON FACEBOOK TODAY!

SAVE BIRMINGHAM GAY VILLAGE CAMPAIGN

Members of Birmingham City Council came out in force on Saturday 26 January to observe the vibrancy of the Birmingham Gay Village

Here are some of your comments on social media...

For me, this isn't about what I identify as. It's about the complete lack of regard for a community of people, and how the council are under the impression that people can be swept away! The council's approach reminds me of the Nazi Party's ethnic cleansing. Simply disgusted.



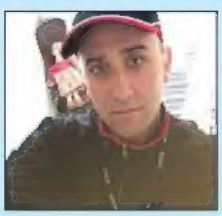
Adam David

Until I can go to a non-LGBT club and not get harassed, sexually assaulted and verbally abused, safe spaces are needed. Also, gay culture is important, a safe space to dance how we like, to dress how we like and kiss whoever we want without being looked at like zoo animals.

Amanda Brandom

What if we all moved into those residential buildings? Then the only downside will be that taxi drivers won't be needed anymore.

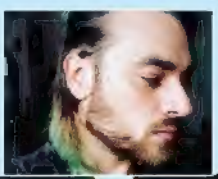
Thomas James Bolton



It's a dive round them areas anyways. I think the LGBTQ area should be somewhere better. Somewhere safer but in the town centre.

Peter Rogers

Personally, as a Queer man, I don't think that segregated gay clubs are necessary anymore anyway.



Stuart Dixon

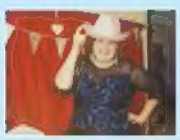
I don't understand the issues here. We fight for equality and then kick off when a segregated area is integrated?

Ian Campbell

I'm not LGBTQ, but I believe in equality for all. The city centre is not a residential area and shouldn't become a residential area. That is a stupid idea. I love that my city is a massive mixing pot of people. I don't want anyone being driven out.

Gilly Erica

The Gay Village means so much to the LGBTQ+ community and also to Birmingham as a city - this section is practically a landmark. So many people have been on memorable nights out and taken part in events such as Pride.



Lotte Beth

ON THE BALL
with
Steve Ball

Saving our Gaybourhoods

Dry January is over; get out there and order a queer beer!

> "the more gay people a city attracts – the more tolerant it's likely to be."

When I first moved to Birmingham 30 years ago, the city's gay village consisted of two or three pubs on Hurst Street, along with the Nightingale Club tucked away at the side of the Hippodrome theatre.

It was a downtrodden area largely unrecognisable from the thriving neighbourhood it is today. LGBT bars and clubs have had a catalytic effect in encouraging people back to areas such as Birmingham's Hurst Street, Manchester's Canal Street, London's Soho and New York's East Village

In many ways the LGBT community has been the main driver in repopulating and regenerating these previously rundown areas, sucking in economic investment by creating the sort of diverse environment that attracts the creative workers on which a city's economic success depends.

It s well known that the more gay people a city attracts, the more tolerant it's likely to be.

But gay villages across the world have been victims of their own success.

The establishment of LGBT communities has turned some of these areas into more expensive neighbourhoods, a process of gentrification that has often seen property values rise so high that ordinary LGBT people are priced out of affordable flats and houses. Meanwhile, affluent newcomers buy or rent more expensive properties and then, once they've settled in, object to the licenses of the very bars and clubs on which the gay villages were built.

Picture of a jam packed Nightingale Club for the NYE ReRun last month!

Consequently many cities have experienced an epidemic of LGBT business closures.

In London alone, more than 10 have pulled down their shutters permanently since 2010

One thing is certain, though. Unless we continue to use the bars, clubs and businesses in our gay villages, and unless we stand together against the corporate developments that threaten these venues and businesses, our so-called gay villages will be a thing of the past.

Dry January is over; get out there and order a queer beer!

Controversy over the addition of two new colours to the Gay Pride Flag

Last month, Manchester Pride caused controversy with the announcement that it would be adopting a redesigned version of the rainbow gay Pride flag. The new flag's first ever appearance, in Philadelphia in the US in 2017, had proved similarly controversial.

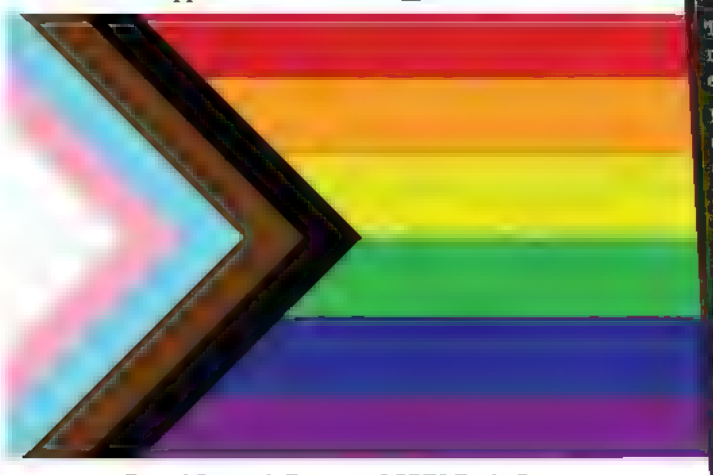
Above the traditional top red stripe were new brown and black ones. The additions, meant to represent LGBTQ people of colour, were enthusiastically welcomed by many activists and advocates. For some people, however, the new stripes felt like an unnecessary alteration to an iconic LGBTQ symbol. Here's what you need to know...

The original gay Pride flag, designed by Gilbert Baker in 1978, featured eight colours, with each colour representing something different.

At the top was hot pink, representing sex. Red was for life, orange for healing, yellow signified sunlight, green represented nature, turquoise stood for art, indigo for harmony and violet for spirit.

When it came to actually producing the flag, the pink and turquoise colours were dropped.

The original gay Pride flag, designed by Gilbert Baker more than 40 years ago, in 1978.



Daniel Quasar's Progress LGBTQ Pride flag was launched last year amid similar controversy

ZONE SAYS

Who would have thought that a flag which is supposed to unite us could cause such division within the LGBTQ community?

The fact is that the original gay flag will always be the most popular and familiar design - it's already established worldwide and is here to stay.

But simply put, there are many different versions of that original flag - including the most recent one, Progress, designed by Daniel Quasar and launched in 2018, a full year after Philadelphia presented to the world the version which Manchester Pride has now chosen to adopt. Daniel's version goes further, and features stripes that represent the BAME community (black, Asian and minority ethic), the trans community and those living with HIV/AIDS.

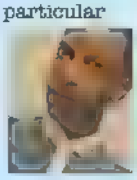
So whichever version of the gay flag you feel most comfortable with, adopt it, own it, and wave the bloody thing as much as you can - and with PRIDE.

What is far more troubling is that the debate has highlighted just how much discrimination and division still exists within the LGBTQ community - and that's something which is of far greater concern.

Some of your comments on social media:

AGAINST

As someone who is in the ethnic minority, I actually find this quite insulting. The Pride flag to me has always been about being inclusive, no matter sex, race or age. When the hell did we get to a point where we now need to introduce colours to specify a particular race or group of people? Love Is Love - it doesn't discriminate. If the Pride flag is to change, then we might as well put the whole colour pallette in, to include other minorities who aren't black or brown.



Quetez Agepito Campbell-Wright

No, I don't think it should change. As a person of colour, I think the flag has always represented me, and I have always felt involved in the community I think people should first look back at the history of the flag and what it truly means.

Stephen Clarke

My personal opinion is no. The rainbow flag has never been about colour

Garry Prentice

You alter things so much that they end up standing for nothing anymore.

Aaron Fellows

Simply, no. Inclusivity should cover all races and colours. The minute you bring in skin colour, it's no longer inclusive.

Craig Drew-Dutton

FOR

Given that the Stonewall riot was spearheaded by Marsha Johnson, a black trans woman, yes, the black and brown stripes should definitely be added to the flag, and should have been added from the get-go.

Never mind "it isn't about race", it should be, because BAME members of the LGBTQ community are still an oppressed group of people today.

Kate Maffin

For me, the flag is about inclusivity.

The more people in our community who feel included, the better!

David Nash

Let change happen. How exactly does it affect anybody if two more colours are added to the flag? Come on, people...

Sean Brine

I say yes It's a positive change. By including the black and brown stripes, we are showing a legitimate interest in inclusion and support of queer POC (People of Colour) when historically they have been shunned and disengaged from the community.

Adding black and brown stripes does not lessen the validity of queer white people. It's simply showing that the LGBTQ+ community acknowledges the fact that queer POC feel ostracised, and that they are in fact welcome to be part of the wider queer community.

Gabe Capes

Do you think Birmingham Pride should also adopt the Gay Pride flag that includes black and brown?

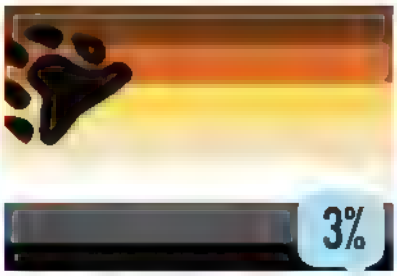
Midlands Zone's online survey showed a strong majority (69%) are not in favour of Birmingham Pride adopting the black-and-brown-stripes version of the gay flag. A further 13% were of the same opinion but didn't hold the view as strongly

Meanwhile, 14% of respondents *were* in favour of Pride adopting the black/brown version of the flag. Of these, 60% held the view strongly

The survey was carried out in January 2019 and featured 1,482 respondents from across the LGBTQ community

Which LGBTQ+ flag do you identify with most?

GAY PRIDE

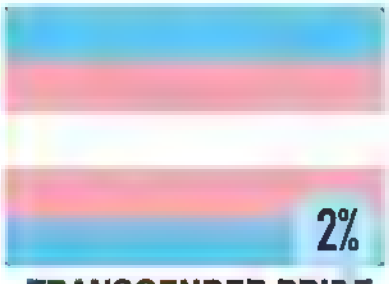


BEAR PRIDE

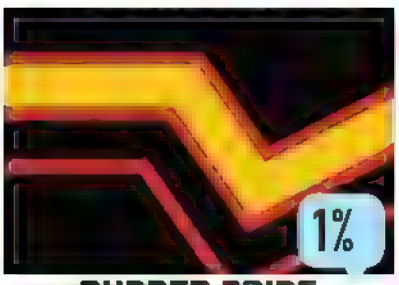
BISEXUAL PRIDE

LEATHER PRIDE

MANCHESTER PRIDE



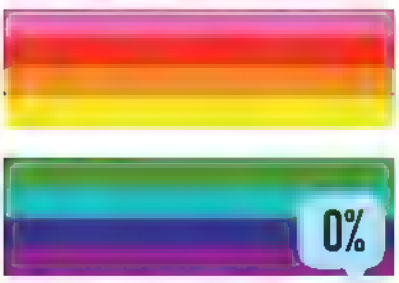
TRANSGENDER PRIDE



RUBBER PRIDE

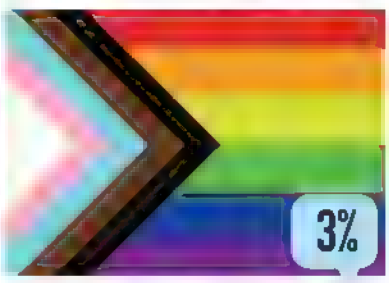
PANSEXUAL PRIDE

POLYAMOROUS PRIDE



SAO PAULO, BRASIL LGBT

LESBIAN PRIDE



PROGRESS LGBT+ PRIDE

Which comment mostly aligns with your opinion?

It's just another variation on the Gay Pride flag get over it!

3%

If adding black and brown to the flag makes some in the LGBTQ+ community feel more included, then that s a good thing

13%

The Gay Pride flag has never been about race.

71%

There are far more important challenges than discussing the merits of a flag.

2%

Aren't we just becoming too politically correct?

11%

PRIDE FLAG: The casual racism of a comfortable majority?

Rico Johnson-Sinclair reflects on the furore over the proposed addition of the colours black and brown to the rainbow flag. This controversy has been further stoked recently by a promotional poster from a Manchester-based drag queen which depicted a unicorn vomiting the black and brown stripes. Here, Rico shares his thoughts on the matter...

'What about me?' scream the most represented people in our community

Over the past few weeks, there's been a kind of mutiny within the LGBTQIA+ community. Careers have been put on ice and racist remarks have been launched into the black hole that is becoming social media in the 21st century.

So how did this all begin? With two stripes being introduced to the symbol of our community - the rainbow flag.

Firstly, let it be known that the addition of the black and brown stripes is not a new thing, nor is the debate about it a new one. The black and brown stripes were first introduced by the US city of Philadelphia for its Pride month 2017, as an acknowledgment of the hardships faced by QTIPOC (Queer & Trans People of Colour) in the LGBTQIA+ community.

Launched on 8 June of that year, the new style flag caused great indignation both locally and internationally as it practically broke the queer internet. QTIPOC mostly rejoiced at the recognition; the feeling that, for the first time since most of us had our rebirths into the big queer sphere, we were seen. But the voices of dissent were all too loud.

It's impossible to disregard the ignorance of those unaffected by the issues that the stripes were added to combat. This is evident from their lack of knowledge that this addition pre-dates Manchester Pride's decision to adopt the changes

And I have to say, I've grown used to the casual racism and discriminatory attitudes towards black and brown people in the community. So whilst the casually racist poster of the unicorn vomiting the black and brown stripes at the bottom of a poster emblazoned with the words 'taste *the* rainbow' hurt my feelings, it was because man invented graphic designs for a reason, and there is no excuse for such poor promotional materials.

It's no big secret that the ones with the most privilege are often unable to relate to the most underrepresented and marginalised. I'm pretty sure there's a word for it.

It is here I must offer my praise to Manchester Pride for sticking to their guns, despite the fierce backlash that followed. And then to our very own Birmingham Pride, for the acknowledgment that whilst this was a difficult road to take, it was one of progress and acceptance - the very narrative that our community (sometimes falsely) seems to favour.

The fact that there's all this debate around the changes means that the changes are in fact working. Whilst I believe the changes should be temporary (as temporary as the racism in the community should be), more people than ever are engaging in a dialogue about racism in the community. This gives QTIPOC a platform to express our issues.

A large percentage of the people who are actively rejecting the change are cisgender white gay men and women who have put more effort into refusing the new flag in the last month than they ever have in trying to dismantle the racism in the community, while preaching unity and that love is love. These are probably the same people who think that being called a 'social justice warrior' is a bad thing, and temporarily forget that enough snowflakes can cause an avalanche.

Just last week I visited a Facebook post by LGBT Manchester where a white gay man said there's no racism in the community, while telling a brown person to go and climb a tree, insinuating that he was a monkey. In that same post, dozens of people stopped by to comment about how racism doesn't exist, and that black and brown people are misinformed about their own experiences.

I first experienced the gay scene when I

The poster depicting a unicorn vomiting the newly adopted Manchester Pride flag with black and brown stripes

was very young. I was homeless at the time and had no support network. I was dismissed from the one place I thought I'd be accepted, because I am black and for no other reason. So arguments about the LGBT community being inclusive fall on deaf ears with me - I know my own history too well.

Whilst most discuss the obvious - sexual preferences which are inherently racist and the festishisation of people of colour, which is equally as racist - what's rarely discussed is casual racism, the instant mistrust of people of colour in nightclubs, whether with drinks or money. I've seen my fair share of instances where people who have money in their hand will move away from people of colour, towards a group of straight men dancing with their girlfriends, ironically.

I've also been stripsearched on two occasions while out on the gay scene because I 'look like someone else who's black' and who had a history of selling drugs on the scene.

We haven't come far from the era of signs outside bars that read, 'No Blacks, Fems or Faggots'. It's just that now it's morphed into 'No Blacks, No Spice, No Rice' on a plethora of grindr profiles.

Just as LGBTQ+ people won their rights by rioting, it requires invasive action to facilitate change regarding racism too

The Top 5 Finalists

After more than 9,000 votes were cast in Part One of the Readers' Awards, we're pleased to announce your top five finalists in each category. Online voting has now re-opened so that you can choose your winner! Voting will continue right the way through until Thursday 28 February. All previous votes will be added to the new votes cast. Make sure you pick up a copy of the April issue of Midlands Zone, because that's where you'll see all of your winners! In the meantime, get voting now at **midlandszone.co.uk**

Best Birmingham Gay Nightclub

Top 5 Finalists

- Boltz
- Core Club
- Club Chic
- Glamorous
- The Nightingale

Best Midlands Community Gay Bar

Top 5 Finalists

- Dover Castle - Leicester
- Eden - Birmingham
- Equator - Birmingham
- The Fox - Birmingham
- The Yard - Coventry

Best Midlands Venue Outdoor Area

Top 5 Finalists

- Eden - Birmingham
- The Fox - Birmingham
- The Lion - Walsall
- The Loft - Birmingham
- The Yard - Coventry

Best OVERALL Birmingham Venue

Top 5 Finalists

- Eden
- The Loft
- Missing
- The Nightingale
- The Village Inn

Best Midlands Gay Nightclub (Outside Birm)

Top 5 Finalists

- Gorgeous - Wolverhampton
- Gossip - Stoke-On-Trent
- Helsinki - Leicester
- The Lion - Walsall
- The Yard - Coventry

Best Midlands Cafe Bar / Restaurant

Top 5 Finalists

- The Loft - Birmingham
- Rainbow & Dove - Leicester
- Sidewalk - Birmingham
- Peach Tree - Shrewsbury
- The Yard - Coventry

Best Midlands New Venue / Refurb

Top 5 Finalists

- Bullring Tavern - Birmingham
- Bar Diva - Dudley
- Glamorous - Coventry
- Sequin Showstoppers - Brum
- The Yard - Coventry

Best OVERALL Midlands Venue (Outside Birmingham)

Top 5 Finalists

- Dover Castle - Leicester
- Gorgeous - Wolverhampton
- Gossip - Stoke on Trent
- The Lion - Walsall
- The Yard - Coventry

Best Birmingham Gay Bar

Top 5 Finalists

- Eden
- The Loft
- Missing
- The Fox
- The Village Inn

Best Midlands Bar/Club for Men

Top 5 Finalists

- Boltz - Birmingham
- The Core - Birmingham
- Eden - Birmingham
- The Fountain Inn - Birmingham
- The Yard - Coventry

Best Midlands venue Front of House Team

Top 5 Finalists

- Dover Castle - Leicester
- Eden - Birmingham
- The Fox - Birmingham
- The Village Inn - Birmingham
- The Yard - Coventry

Best Midlands Venue One-Nighter

Top 5 Finalists

- Mids Bears @ Eden - Birmingham
- Eden Quizzical @ Eden - Birmingham
- Glittershit @ The Nightingale - Birmingham
- Saathi @ The Nightingale - Birmingham
- XXL @ The Core Club - Birmingham

Best Midlands Gay Bar (Outside Birmingham)

Top 5 Finalists

- Bar Diva - Dudley
- Dover Castle - Leicester
- Glamorous - Coventry
- Rainbow & Dove - Leicester
- The Yard - Coventry

Best Midlands Bar/Club for Women

Top 5 Finalists

- The Fox - Birmingham
- Gorgeous - Wolverhampton
- Gossip - Stoke-on-Trent
- Sidewalk - Birmingham
- The Yard - Coventry

Best Midlands venue Security Team

Top 5 Finalists

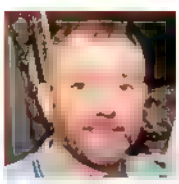
- Eden - Birmingham
- The Village Inn - Birmingham
- Missing - Birmingham
- The Nightingale - Birmingham
- The Yard - Coventry

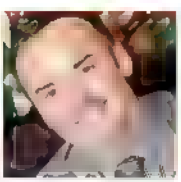
Best Midlands Live Entertainment venue

Top 5 Finalists

- Eden - Birmingham
- Missing - Birmingham
- The Nightingale - Birmingham
- The Village Inn - Birmingham
- The Yard - Coventry

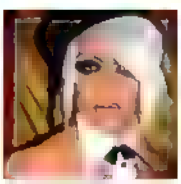
Scene Personality of the Year


Garry Prentice

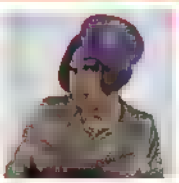

Lawrence Barton

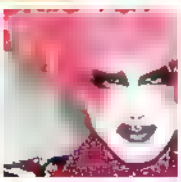
Miss Penny

Twiggy


Marty Smith

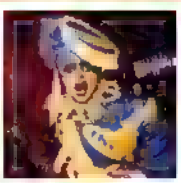
Best Compere/Host in the Midlands


Yhsee Black


Twiggy

Yogi

Amy LaQueefa


Queeny

DON'T FORGET!

You can still nominate your favourite people for

- Youth Achievement
- Outstanding Contribution
- Lifetime Achievement

Best Cabaret Act in the Midlands

Pam Catz

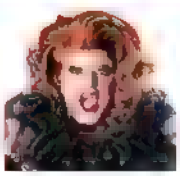
Miss Penny

Amy Laqueefa

Divine Miss M

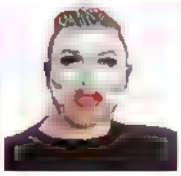
Vicky Jackson

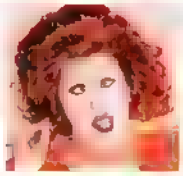
Best National Cabaret Act


Miss Penny

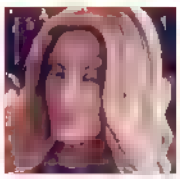
Mary Mac

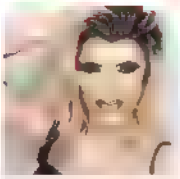
Sandra London

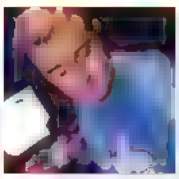

Danny Beard

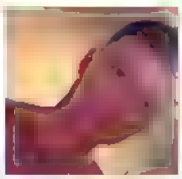

Fanny Burns

Best Midlands Bar DJ


Destiny Dyson
- Gossip

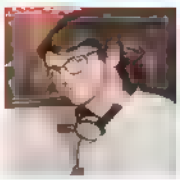

Blanche
- The Village Inn


Mike Emery
- Missing

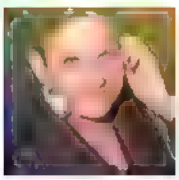

Scott Hilton
- The Village Inn

Toni Lee
- Eden

Best Midlands Club DJ


Richard Alexander
- The Yard, Coventry

Robbie Lewis
- The Nightingale

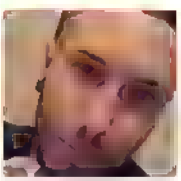

Corey Hadley
- Village Underground

James Silver
- Club Chic

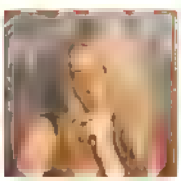
Paul Morrell
- XXL (The Core)

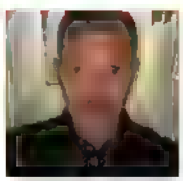
Best Front of House Person

Stephen Lambert
- Missing Bar


Shan Carney
- The Yard, Coventry

Mikey Elston
- The Village


Patsy Lewis
- Missing


Garry Prentice
- Eden

Best Midlands Pride Event

Top 5 Finalists

- Birmingham Pride
- Coventry Pride
- Leicester Pride
- Stoke-On-Trent Pride
- Worcester Pride

Best Midlands LGBT Event

Top 5 Finalists

- LGBT+ inclusion in Sport
- Picnic in the Park, Birmingham
- Pink Picnic (Shrewsbury)
- Rainbow Film Festival, S'bury
- SHOUT Festival, Birmingham

Best LGBT Charity or Group of Achievement

Top 5 Finalists

- Birmingham LGBT (Umbrella)
- Prism - Coventry
- Positive West Midlands
- Terrence Higgins Trust
- Trade Sexual Health

Best LGBT Sport or Social Group

Top 5 Finalists

- Acting Out
- BGSO
- Birmingham Blaze FC
- Birmingham Bulls RFC
- Birmingham Swifts

Best Midlands Health Club / Sauna

Top 5 Finalists

- CS2 - Nottingham
- The Greenhouse - Darlaston
- Splash - Leicester
- Spartan - Birmingham
- Unit 2 - Birmingham

Best LGBT-Friendly Online or Retail Store

Top 5 Finalists

- Prowler - Online
- Clonezone - Birmingham
- John Lewis - Birmingham
- Harvey Nichols - Birmingham
- Selfridges - Birmingham

Best Security Person

Top 5 Finalists

- Carl Cino - Gossip
- James Dixon - Club Chic
- Kimberley Jones - The Village
- Janine Webb - The Yard
- Kevin Mulligan - The Nightingale

VOTING CLOSES
SUNDAY 3 MARCH 2019

VOTE ONLINE AT: **www.midlandszone.co.uk**

TIME TO MEET YOUR SEASON 11 QUEENS...

RuPaul's Drag Race is back for yet another series! Season 11, which will air later this year on Netflix, will see 15 queens go head-to-head in a battle to win $100,000 prize money and the title of America's Next Drag Superstar. Here's a run down of the latest line-up ahead of the season premiere...

HOMETOWN Philadelphia
(based in New York City)
WHAT'S THE TEA? This Davenport family member is the drag mother of Monét X Change.

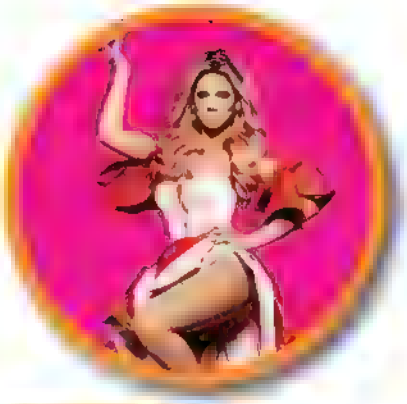
HOMETOWN New Jersey
(based in Philadelphia)
WHAT'S THE TEA? This life-sized Bratz doll has more than 130,000 Instagram followers.

HOMETOWN California
(based in New York City)
WHAT'S THE TEA? True to her name, this queen reportedly lives for sweet treats.

HOMETOWN Dallas
(based in Houston)
WHAT'S THE TEA? Previous winner of Miss Black Universe and Miss International Vogue

HOMETOWN Panama City Beach
(based in Las Vegas)
WHAT'S THE TEA? This Las Vegas showgirl is the drag daughter of season five's Coco Montrese.

HOMETOWN Greentown
(based in Columbus, Ohio)
WHAT'S THE TEA? This queen has raised over $2million for LGBTQIA+ causes.



PLASTIQUE TIARA
HOMETOWN Dallas
WHAT'S THE TEA? Alyssa Edwards' drag daughter has more than 275,000 Instagram followers.

SILKY NUTMEG GANACHE
HOMETOWN Mississippi (based in Chicago)
WHAT'S THE TEA? This pageant diva has more than 100 competition credits under her belt.

VANESSA VANPE MATEO
HOMETOWN Tampa
WHAT'S THE TEA? "Miss Vaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaanjie!" - this returning season-10 queen needs no reintroduction.

Denver
This alt-drag queen is known for her high-flying stunts and other athletic manoeuvres.

BROOKE LYNN HYTES
HOMETOWN Toronto (based in Nashville)
WHAT'S THE TEA? Winner of Miss Continental in 2014.

Louisville (based in New York City)
This queen has previously appeared in the Sasha Velour showcase, Nightgowns.

RAJAH O'HARA
HOMETOWN Dallas
WHAT'S THE TEA? Crowned Miss Texas FFI, just like Kennedy Davenport and Asia O'Hara.

SOJU
HOMETOWN Chicago
WHAT'S THE TEA? This queen has her own YouTube channel dedicated to all things drag.

HOMETOWN Minneapolis
WHAT'S THE TEA? Mercedes is the first Muslim Queen ever to compete on Drag Race.

LET'S TALK:

Female Drag

WITH OUR NEW COLUMNIST LACEY

Here we are again, having to debate the validity of people's art. Over it yet? I know I am!

Most of us love drag in all its forms, from huge-haired sequin adorned gown queens to the weird and wonderful Club Kids. Creativity and humour mashed together to create, essentially, fun! We're all born naked, and the rest is drag, right? Unfortunately, not always and not for everyone.

Over my years of performing as a drag artist, I've come to find that, as consumers of drag (ie the audience), we can be really obsessed with gender. What makes a woman? What makes a man? Why are we so obsessed?! Do we need these anatomical and behavioural constraints to help us understand? I mean, we all seem to feel more comfortable with labels; it helps us define things into neat groups. But what if some of these labels are actually doing more harm than good?

Picture this. I'm sipping my cheap vodka, trying to catch my breath from dancing and realising that, yes, I am, in fact, very unfit and no longer a spring chicken (dammit). I'm approached by a drunk customer who can't even stand, complete with makeup everywhere but on their face. Slurringly, they ask, "Are you a man or a woman? You re a woman; I can tell by your boobs." They then proceed to grab aforementioned boobies. In the past I would have smiled sweetly and responded, confused as to why they were asking me quite a weird question. Now, after many years of drag service, it takes every inch of grace not to Jackie Chan their arse.

And this narrative happens every time I'm in drag, either working or drunkenly playing.

I began to delve into these questions around labelling and concluded that the hideous source was... wait for it... RuPaul's Drag Race (insert rakakaka shady rattlesnake sound). Now, I will admit that I do watch the show - it's so bad it's good! - but where were the women like me on there? Then came the quotes from RuPaul that he would 'probably not' allow a transgender woman to perform on the show, and that 'drag loses its sense of danger and its sense of irony once it's not men doing it'. The nail in the coffin was his response to a fan asking him when we would see a female drag queen on the programme, to which he responded, 'That show already exists. Its called Miss Universe' (insert rakakaka shady rattlesnake sound again). Correct me if I'm wrong, but I'm pretty sure drag performers and pageant contestants are 'universes' apart... Miss America would be horrified if I turned up with this draggy mug!

Nevertheless, you carry on being a queen because you love it and it makes you happy, but you never feel quite accepted. It's like you're hiding a dirty secret between your legs. So I did my research. Surely there had to be women back in the day who did drag - and if so, why is it still a taboo today? Well, plainly and simply, misogyny doesn't stop at the borders of sexuality; it is in *our* community too, and has affected both our women and our representation of drag for years

Join me now on a brief journey through our queer history, focusing on some of the women and movements that have shaped it.

In 1955, lesbian couple Del Martin and Phyllis Lyon form The Daughters of Bilitis, a lesbian sociopolitical rights organisation providing support for women too afraid to come out. It went on to become an educational resource for lesbians and gay men. You go, girls!

Fast forward to one of *the* most famous LGBTQ+ events - the Stonewall Riots of 1969. The Stonewall Inn was home to the more-marginalised people in the LGBTQ+ community, including drag queens, transgender people, effeminate men and masc lesbians. After one raid too many, the community had had enough and rebelled, causing riots which lasted for two days. Amongst the instigators were Marsha P Johnson and Sylvia Rivera, two transgender women and self-described drag queens, as well as lesbian drag king Storme DeLarverie. These three ladies were responsible for what became our Pride festivals - and they were drag performers!

As well as the men who shaped

history through activism and drag performing, the women have also been there, just as strong. However, we've allowed the negative societal perception of women to infiltrate our community. It has erased and discredited our women to the point where we're now telling women their drag art is not as legitimate as that of their male peers. For many generations, that's how it's been. I understand that change can be hard, especially when 'the way things are' is all you know. However, these women fighting alongside the men have always been there. We are all fighting for the same thing - to be treated equally and with respect.

When I first started drag in Birmingham, there were no actively working female drag performers to look up to; I didn't know I had permission. Fast forward to now, when we have a drag community of members of different ages, genders, sexualities and races. This is the same around the country, with most cities and towns boasting bubbling creative scenes full of all different types of people, including female drag performers. Let's listen to what's happening in these communities and try to accept all genders of drag as just drag!

Drag is an artistic performance that challenges gender stereotypes and should be based on talent, not genitalia.

Lacey X

Want to carry on the chat? Tweet or Instagram me @laceymcfadyen

For all the lovers...

The 14th of February is all about love, romance and, if we're being cynical, spending far too much money. But do we really need to splash loads of cash to show our undying love? We've taken a look at what's out there this Valentine's Day and picked some of our favourites to share with you...

Romantic Dinner for 2...

yes - we know it's a cliche and all so predictable - but it's always a good safe bet, isn't it. And, The Loft in Birmingham (see opposite) is offering one of the most competitive Valentine's deals around... **2 courses £14.95 and 3 courses £16.95 - bargain!**

Let it be known that you love ANAL...

That's Absolutely Never-ending Amazing Love (A**L). And at only **£2.49**, this sign from Grindstone Originals (grindstore.com) is the perfect gift for skinflints!

"Roses are red - Valentine's is taboo"

I'm not a fan of Valentine's Day. Don't get me wrong, I like romance as much as the next person. But the day itself? Nah, not for me.

Regardless of my views on the topic, the air is thick with the red of hearts and roses every February Why are cut flowers and body blood pumps the sign of adoration?

Okay, so roses are pretty while they're fresh, but should you be lucky enough to receive any, the next two weeks are spent watching them shrivel. And I've never been sure why hearts are a symbol of love. Have you ever seen a heart? They are disgusting looking things

If we're to have a body part to represent love, maybe a stomach would be more appropriate given the numbers of us trooping to restaurants every Valentine's Day to prove our love. Or maybe lips should be the symbol of romance? Just something that doesn't smell of old blood would be a blessing.

St Valentine himself is an obscure saint from the dullest of Middle Ages way back in the Days of Yore. He martyred himself somehow, but no one is quite sure how or why. Rumour and conjecture has it that St Valentine was a martyr so unknown that he was gifted an empty day to keep as his own. Shame was that he'd already been dead for about 15 centuries by the time someone thought to give him this gift. He was probably past caring. Quite amazing that his name is so well known these days.

But my main problem with Valentine's Day is that we're doing it all the wrong way around. February the 14th should be the day we *don't* have to be romantic. We should be able to loll about on the sofa, farting, not doing the washing up, wearing dirty knickers, failing to open the door for our loved one, and telling them everything that's wrong with them.

Once we've got it all out of our systems, we are then free to spend the other 364 days of the year being lovely to each other and making sure our backsides aren't hanging out of our jeans and all the rest of that romantic stuff.

Struggling to say what you mean?...

...Then these chocolate hearts may be the solution. We can't vouch for the marketing statement of 'scrumptious', but we reckon the tongue-in-cheek slogans might help in getting your message across - or not! Good luck...

Obnoxious Chocs Chocolate Gift Box, **£14.95** from notonthehighstreet.com

Anti-Valentine's Night?

Head for Birmingham's Midlands Arts Centre (mac) on the 14th of the month, where an Anti-Valentine's shindig includes a complimentary cocktail or mocktail, unlimited party food, Anti-Valentine's games with prizes, live music and a screening of the Michael Douglas/ Glenn Close movie Fatal Attraction.

CAT'S CORNER
by Gudrun

Those of us who're looking for love would find the world far more prepared for our advances, and those of us with love would have a great time skipping around in rose petals and eating chocolate and generally being treated like the princesses we all are. The world would surely be a far happier place. And St Valentine - whoever he was - would surely be as happy as a very dead martyr can be.

Happy Valentine's Day! xx

VALENTINE'S SPECIAL

13TH & 14TH FEB

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£14.95

· 3 COURSES ·
£16.95

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THIS GAY LIFE:
The Stephen Spinks Column

"Jesus Christ!" Love is Love

There's nothing more pure and wholesome than loving someone. When they love you back, it can be all-consuming. Love is the most common bond we share as people around the globe. Love doesn't care if you're rich or poor, young or old, gay or straight. Love doesn't recognise social or cultural boundaries. Love is love, after all. But when love and religion meet head on, LGBTQ love often becomes more complicated.

> "Some Jewish theological studies have begun to argue that **only the act of a**l sex is prohibited**"

There are so many religions around the world, new, young and old, that play a central role in people's lives today. Many of us growing up in the UK have forgone religion - but what if you haven't? What happens when you're LGBTQ and hold to a faith, yet your religion denies you simply because of who you cannot help but love?

HORROR STORIES

For years I've read and heard the horror stories of men and women cast out of their churches, temples and mosques simply because of whom they happen to love. Intolerance, scripture and the proclaimed word of God are always the go-to justifications for casting people out. It's a cold, cruel act which always appears to me to contradict religious teaching of love, respect and community.

The mainstay religions have always been critical of us gays. Christianity, that 2,000-year-old religion with its many and often complex branches, is most certainly one. Roman Catholicism, the Eastern Orthodox Church and many Evangelical branches are adamant in their opposition to same-sex union, viewing homosexuality ultimately as sinful. While in some cases members of the LGBTQ community are able to remain within their religious community, two men sleeping together is deemed as a bridge too far; a seemingly unnatural subversion of marriage and procreation. While same-sex feelings are tolerated in the individual, that person must remain chaste, denying themselves the opportunity of love and sex. Toleration and chastity are the bywords of this religion, and it can't fail but leave a bad taste in the mouth. Who wants to be tolerated and chaste?

A**L ABOMINATION

My Jewish friends fair no better, especially if they're Orthodox. The ancient Torah, the first five books of the Hebrew Bible, states 'a man shall not lie with another man as he would with a woman because it is an abomination'. For Orthodox Jews, gay sex is a definite no-no. Yet some Jewish theological studies have begun to argue that only the act of a**l sex is prohibited, leaving gay men with greater opportunity to remain true to their faith but avoiding what is, for some, a key part of their sexual experience.

GAY GOD: "ACTS AS A SHRINE FOR THE LGBT UNITY"

DEATH PENALTY

In Islam the rules are not so relaxed. Homosexuality is strictly condemned, being seen as an unnatural temptation and a subversion of the natural role and aim of sex. Complete abstention is expected, with social exclusion a likely outcome for anyone thought to be gay In many Middle Eastern countries, those caught in the moment are likely to suffer the death penalty.

In Mormonism, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints has a broader teaching that no one should engage in sex outside of marriage, so LGBTQ people are therefore excluded from expressing their sexual desire and love at all.

I recently watched a documentary on iPlayer called Believer, which focuses on the lead singer of Imagine Dragons and also singer/songwriter Tyler Glenn - both Mormons; the latter, gay - working to change hearts and minds and create acceptance for LGBTQ people within their religion. Appealing to their audience, they are tapping into the younger generation of Mormons who are generally more liberal in their faith, despite much more conservative church peers remaining resistant to change.

ATTITUDE CHANGE

Yet attitudes are changing in other religions too. Reform or Liberal Judaism takes a more pragmatic view, believing that the old laws are no longer binding or that they should be read with our current understanding of sexuality. In other words, being gay and engaging in a loving, sexual relationship is deemed acceptable.

HIGHLY DIVISIVE

In Christianity, in some branches of the Anglican Faith, LGBTQ communities are now accepted rather than just tolerated or expected to modify their behaviour. Yet this remains a highly divisive issue, polarised in recent years by the advent of gay marriage in church. Too many churches are still allowed to opt out on grounds of faith.

Hinduism is a much more decentralised religion, and more complex to wrap your

This year's Birmingham Pride theme is LOVE OUT LOUD

head around. Some elements of Hinduism, like the Rigveda, when referring to the nature of Samsara, state that diversity is what nature is all about, so by default what can be seen as unnatural is in fact natural.

Some Hindu texts, like the Manu Smriti, also refer to a third gender, asserting that some people are born with a mixed male and female nature which is natural and simply part of the biological order. These enlightened texts, despite being between 2,000 and 3,000 years old, could teach many other religions, and indeed many modern cultures, a thing or two.

NEW GAY GOD

Yet as the world undergoes a paradigm shift and liberal cultures find their voice, being gay and with a belief in God is not entirely incompatible. In Taiwan, the people of Yonghe District in New Taipei City have created a new religion: Tu'er Shen, otherwise known as the Rabbit God. The temple was founded by Lu Wei ming in 2006. The Rabbit God is a gay god, acting as a shrine for the LGBTQ community. Apparently, over 9,000 people visit annually, praying for same-sex love and a good life.

COMING OUT

So where does religion leave us? Many men and women with religious convictions are fundamentally facing hard choices.

The desire to exercise their faith has to be reconciled with their LGBTQ identity Growing up gay, coming out and living life is hard for all of us, but doing this as well as reconciling it to your faith - when your religion tells you you're wrong or should be ashamed, and that you are somehow 'lesser' - remains a disaster of our modern, enlightened times.

For many, there ends up being only one choice: the agonising decision to leave their faith behind and seek a new life of their own, sometimes leaving their family as well as their church behind.

If God is great, omnipotent and the master of creation, then surely we are all part of his design? 'Religion' - the construct of those who proclaim a prescribed and structured faith - and not God, has much to answer for

Love is love, and no matter what your faith may say, you have the right to be loved by simple virtue of who you are. Surely that is part of a much greater divine plan.

NEXT MONTH: Gay Erasure no, not the pop group, but LGBTQ stories erased from history TWITTER: @SparksStephen

BOY ERASED

TRUE STORY of GAY CONVERSION THERAPY

Boy Erased focuses on the character of Jared, the son of a Baptist pastor in a small American town, who is outed to his parents at the age of 19. He is then faced with an ultimatum. attend a conversion therapy programme or permanently be exiled from, and shunned by, his family, friends and faith... The moving story of one young man's struggle to find himself while being forced to question every aspect of his identity, Boy Erased is a sensitive drama based on the real life experiences of Garrard Conley.

Conley turned his traumatic encounter with Love In Action - an 'ex gay' Christian ministry that attempted to change people's sexual orientation - into a memoir that was published in 2016. The memoir, along with the movie, turns the spotlight on a practice that continues to be allowed in

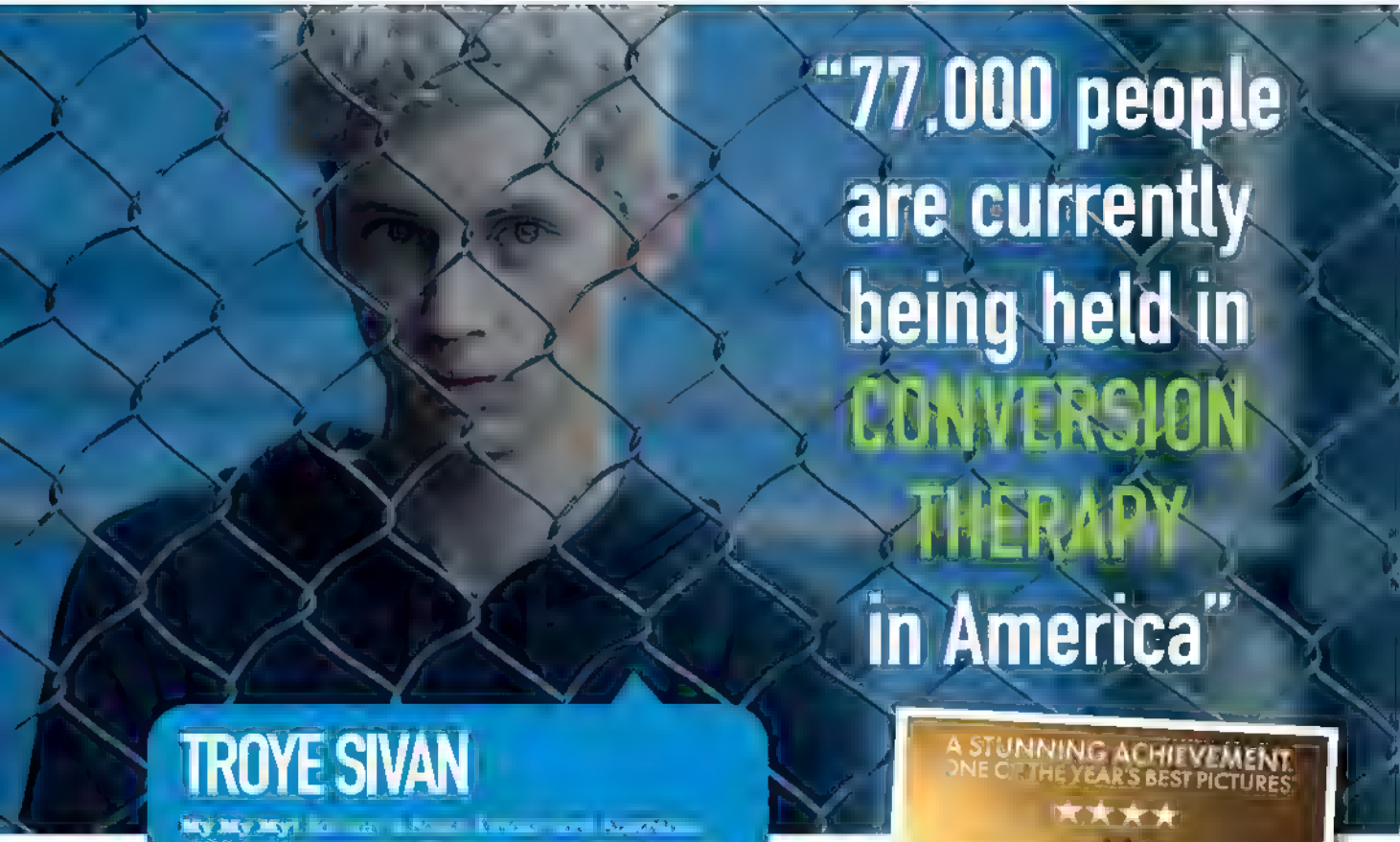
ALL STAR CAST

Lucas Hedges
as Jared Conlon, Jared Eamons

Nicole Kidman
as Nancy Conlon, Nancy Eamons

Russell Crowe
as Marhsall Conlon, Marshall Eamons

Joel Edgerton
as Victor Sykes



"77,000 people are currently being held in CONVERSION THERAPY in America"

TROYE SIVAN

My My My!

O2 Academy, Birmingham Tuesday 26 February

shows in BIRMINGHAM

no fewer than 36 US states. Indeed, a staggering 77,000 people are currently being held in conversion therapy in America. So anybody who thinks the problem has gone away needs to wake up and smell the coffee - particularly during an era in which President Trump and Vice President Mike Pence often fan the flames of bigotry.

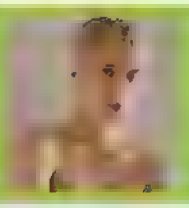
The presence in the movie of Nicole Kidman and Russell Crowe, as Jared's parents, should ensure the film gets the attention it deserves

Boy Erased will be released in cinemas nationwide Friday 8 February

Cherry Jones
as Dr. Muldoon

Flea
as Brandon

Xavier Dolan
as Jon



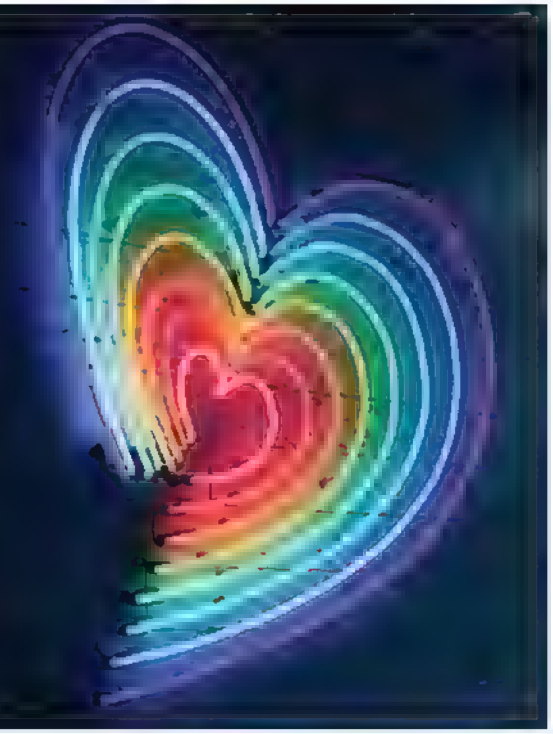
Troye Sivan
as Gary

Joe Alwyn
as Henry

Emily Hinkler
as Dee

LGBT HISTORY MONTH

Remembering those who paved the way...



LGBT History Month promotes themes that are dear to us all - equality, diversity, acceptance and inclusion, to name just a few. This year's theme is Peace, Activism & Reconciliation. As usual, the Midlands will be hosting a number of events to remember those who've fought - and are still fighting - for LGBTQ+ rights, and to raise awareness about a whole range of issues via a variety of mediums, including film, talks, performances and exhibitions.

Here's just a selection of what's happening, and where, across the region...

Birmingham LGBT History Festival:

Various venues, 21 - 24 February

Birmingham LGBT's SHOUT Festival presents the third Birmingham LGBT History Festival, featuring a series of screenings, talks and events exploring LGBTQ+ histories. Marking the 50th anniversary of the Stonewall Riots, the programme includes talks by Dr Michell Chresfield (University of Birmingham) and Jamie Windust - writer, activist and editor of Fruitcake Magazine.

There'll also be an informal afternoon looking at the history of Birmingham's famous Nightingale Club in its 50th anniversary year, and a screening of the documentary Invisible Women, which explores the untold histories of Angela and Luchia, lesbian activists who were pioneers of the women's movement

Further details, schedule and booking information will be announced on **www.shoutfestival.co.uk**

What: Are you Fem dear?
LGBTQ History Month Tour

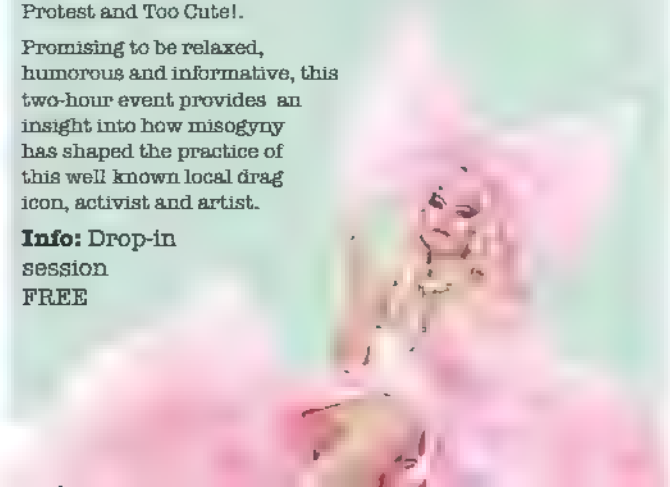
Where: Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery

When: 2 February, 1pm - 3pm

Join new Midlands Zone columnist Lacey Lou as she explores both the museum's historical collections and the contemporary content of current exhibitions Women Power Protest and Too Cute!.

Promising to be relaxed, humorous and informative, this two-hour event provides an insight into how misogyny has shaped the practice of this well known local drag icon, activist and artist.

Info: Drop-in session
FREE



What: Women Power Protest: Mindful Art Workshop

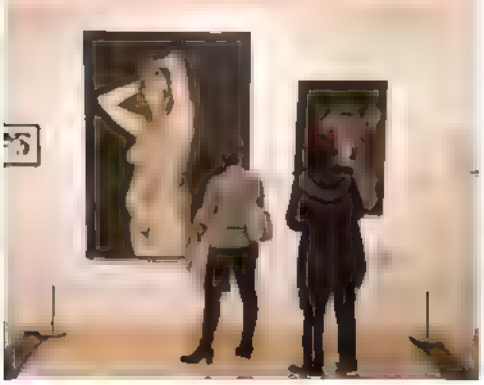
Where: Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery

When: 9 February, 12noon - 1pm

An event originally planned for Birmingham's older LGBTQ+ community as part of the city's Ageing With Pride campaign, this early afternoon event is now open to all and includes workshops themed around the museum's Women Power Protest exhibition.

The event is a response to some of the feminist slogans and vintage erotica on show. The workshop follows a bespoke tour (11am - 12noon) of the Women Power Protest exhibition.

Info: Admission is FREE



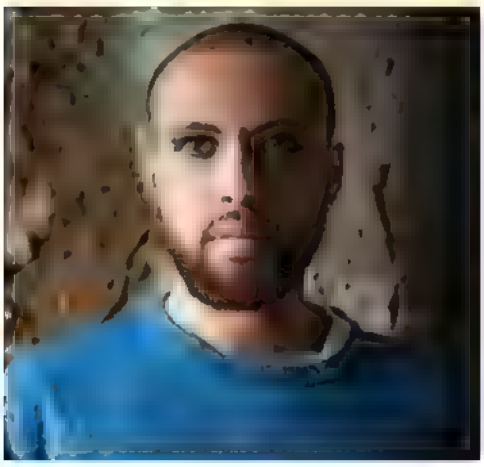
What: Dean Atta: Poetry Evening

Where: The Hive, Shrewsbury

When: 23 February, 7pm - 9.30pm

Named as one of the most influential LGBT people in the Independent On Sunday's Pink List, Dean Atta's performance poetry addresses themes of race, gender, identity and growing up. His debut collection, I Am Nobody's Nigger, was shortlisted for the Polari First Book Prize

Info: Admission £10/£6



More LGBT History Month events taking place across the region...

Samuel Butler: Outing The Past Shrewsbury Museum & Art Gallery, 1 February - 3 March

Exhibition featuring author, artist, photographer and one-time New Zealand sheep farmer Samuel Butler

LGBT+ Quaker Get-together Peace Hub, 41 Bull Street, Birmingham, B18 5NB, 9 & 20 February, 6.30pm - 8pm

Discussion exploring the acceptance of LGBT+ people within the Quaker community, and addressing how Birmingham's Ageing Better campaign can assist connections between the groups. This event is open to LGBT+ people & allies of any age, as well as members and attendees of the Quaker meetings in Central England. It's also open to those interested in finding out more about Quakers.

Ageing With Pride & Ageing Better LGBT Hub Bespoke Tour Birmingham Museum & Arts Gallery, 9 February, 11am -12noon

This event is followed by the Women Power Protest: Mindful Art Workshop featured on the opposite page

LGBT History Month Stall Leamington Town Hall, 9 February, 10am - 1pm

Hosted by Leamington Pride

Gay Birmingham Remembered Revival 9 February, 6pm - 8.30pm, Birmingham LGBT Centre Cafe (38/40 Holloway Circus)

A look at the Gay Birmingham Remembered artwork originally exhibited in the city in 2008 with the support of Birmingham LGBT The event also includes refreshments

LGBT History Month Pub Quiz The Yard, Coventry, 12 February, 8pm - 10pm

Hosted by Coventry Pride

An Afternoon Of Film The Hive, Shrewsbury, 16 February, 2.30pm - 5pm

A special double bill including 'Invisible Women', exploring untold histories of two lesbian activists who were pioneers of the women's movement and 'A Lesbian Life: Outing The 70s And 80s', an interview with the former manager of London's Gays The Word bookshop.

Info: Admission FREE

Screening - 50 Years Legal (15) Old Market Hall, Shrewsbury, 17 February, 7pm

Simon Napier-Bell's documentary featuring high profile members of the LGBT community - Sir Ian McKellen, Sir Elton John, Matt Lucas, Stephen K Amos and Stephen Fry

Info: Admission £10/£9/£8

LGBT+ Monthly Meet The Royal British Legion Pop-in Centre, 87 New Street, Birmingham, B2 4BA, 21 February, 6.30pm - 8pm

Drop into the first LGBTQ veterans' social to see old friends and make some new ones... westmidlands@britishlegion.org.uk

Clare Summerskill: Rights Of Passage The Hive, Shrewsbury, 23 February, 2pm

Presentation talk in which playwright, actress, singer/songwriter and lesbian comedienne Clare Summerskill talks about the issues addressed in her latest play, Rights Of Passage.

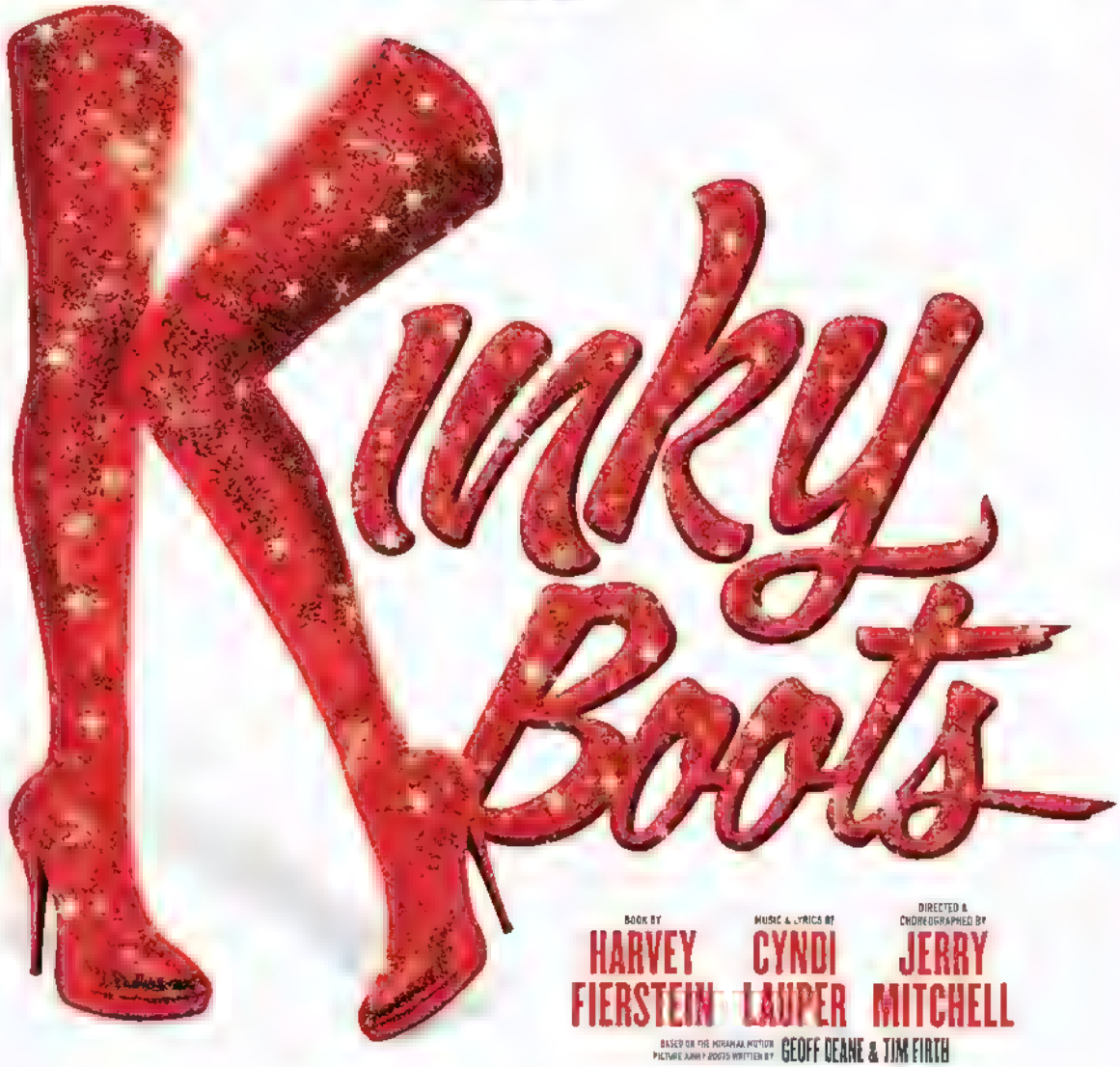
LGBT+ BAME Youth Festival Curzon Building, Birmingham City University, Sat 23 February, 11am - 6.30pm

A day for young people (16-25) to connect and explore their identities through activities, workshops and more... For further information, visit, colourfestival.eventbrite.com

★★★★★

"FIERCE, FEEL-GOOD FUN WITH A CAPITAL F"

Opening Night



BOOK BY HARVEY FIERSTEIN

MUSIC & LYRICS BY CYNDI LAUPER

DIRECTED & CHOREOGRAPHED BY JERRY MITCHELL

BASED ON THE MIRAMAX MOTION PICTURE KINKY BOOTS WRITTEN BY GEOFF DEANE & TIM FIRTH

BIRMINGHAM HIPPODROME

MON 11 - SAT 23 MARCH

TICKET SALES: **0844 338 5000***

birminghamhippodrome.com

*calls cost 4.5p per min. plus your phone company's access charge

What's On

Arts • Theatre • Entertainment

Winner of RuPaul's Drag Race All Stars 3, Trixie Mattel is back on the road with her Skinny Legend tour

Known for her country music, pink lipstick, relentlessly blonde hair and ridiculously hilarious stories, Trixie already has three critically acclaimed comedy tours under her wig. This fourth installment of music, laughter and surprises looks likely to be every bit as successful as its trio of predecessors.

O2 Academy, Birmingham - Monday 25 February

Robert White's The Tank Top Tour

Clever jokes and pitch-perfect delivery are the stock in trade of gay, Aspergeric and quarter-Welsh musical comedian Robert White. Robert's been playing the Edinburgh Fringe to great effect for the better part of a decade now, but really came to prominence last year when he made the final of Britain's Got Talent. He's visiting the Midlands this month with a suitcase full of his trademark vests and a show that's appropriately entitled The Tank Top Tour.

The Old Rep Theatre, Birmingham - Friday 22 February

The Gay Ballet

First staged in 1995 and the longest-running ballet in the West End and on Broadway, Matthew Bourne's Swan Lake is best known for the fact of having an all-male cast. "It was such an iconic image for people to have a male dancing swan," says Matthew. "It was very unexpected, and people couldn't imagine what it was going to look like. It got dubbed 'the gay Swan Lake', which wasn't what the aim was, but there was certainly a story within it that was very meaningful for gay audiences, and I celebrate that. It's accepted now by a much wider audience, who, rather than be shocked by any element of it, find it uplifting that this is a story being told about a young man who's confused about his future and his sexuality. I think that's something which is very meaningful for young people in the audience."

Birmingham Hippodrome - Tuesday 5 - Saturday 16 February

Quentin Crisp: Naked Hope

Quentin Crisp certainly had a talent for outrageous self publicity

Back in the mid 20th century, 'mincing around' the streets of London in gaudy makeup and dying one's hair crimson was a pretty good way for a gay man to get himself not only noticed but also thoroughly duffed up - and Quentin certainly bagged a beating or two en route to the fame and fragility of his old age

This 'glorious, uplifting celebration of the urgent necessity to be your true self' is directed by Linda Marlowe, who played Sylvie Carter in EastEnders for more than two years.

Artrix, Bromsgrove - Wednesday 13 February

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NEW TRANS PLAY HITS THE MIDLANDS!

Rotterdam

"No, Alice," says Fiona to her long term girlfriend, "I don't want to become a man; I just want to stop trying to be a woman."

A bittersweet comedy about gender identity, sexuality and self acceptance, Jon Brittain's Olivier Award-winning Rotterdam has certainly made its voice heard in the vanguard of creative works featuring transgender characters and stories

It's New Year's Eve and Alice has plucked up the courage to come out to her parents. But before she can do so, Fiona pitches her a massive curveball - she is transgender and wants to transition and live as Adrian..

"In a way it's a kind of rom-com," says Brittain of his play, "inspired by the fact that some of my friends have transitioned, and also by my realisation that there aren't many trans stories in popular culture. Sure, there are trans and queer theatre makers who produce great work, but that doesn't mean it gets the attention it deserves."

KICK SOME ASS!

Kinky Boots comes to the Gay Village

A topical story about diversity and acceptance, Kinky Boots is based on the 2005 film of the same name and features music & lyrics by '80s pop star Cyndi Lauper. Expect a feelgood evening of catchy tunes, fierce anthems and warm-hearted humour

THE PLOT: The newly appointed manager of his late father's shoe factory in Northampton, Charlie Price has got some tough decisions to make as he attempts to save the struggling business. After a chance meeting with drag queen Lola, Charlie identifies a potentially lucrative niche market - creating footwear to cater for men who dress as women...

Birmingham Hippodrome, Mon 11 - Sat 23 March

CHECK OUT! the Kinky Boots feature in our March issue.

WIN! A sex toy goodie bag from Clonezone!

Who says you need a partner on Valentine's Day?
If you're spending V Day alone this year but still looking to have some fun on your own, we've got the perfect prize for you...

We've teamed up with our friends at Clonezone to provide the ultimate sex toy goodie bag for one of our lucky readers!

The goodie bag includes a three-pack of luxurious Titus silicone ribbed butt plugs, a sleek and shiny set of Titus tweezer adjustable nipple clamps, a bottle of the super-popular Mister B extreme glide lube and a Fun Factory JAM 'Simple Pleasure' vibrator.

Enter the competition via our Facebook page at @midlandszone

Have your say!

Let us know what's on your mind...

"Racism is rife"

LGBTQIA? QTIPOC? LGBTQXYZ+-? Tell you what, this is what I identify as... IDGAFF (and if you don't know what that stands for it's .. I Don't Give A Flying F***) so I really don't care about how many colours the rainbow flag has, or what those colours are, or whether the flag features a big fat image of Dorothy or gets shat on by Toto.

The fact is that you can make an argument for including black and brown, and you can make an argument against. It's a passing controversy and we'll all no doubt stop giving a shit when Pride season arrives or there's a brand new series of RuPaul to enjoy.

What does matter, though, is that out there on the streets and in the cyberspace world of social media, racism is rife. Facebook is awash with nasty, vile, horrific comments that clearly illustrate just how massive the problem is.

Some people don't even know when they're being racist, others know only too well and revel in it. What kind of a community are we that this sort of thing goes on? Surely we should know better than most about the damage caused by bigotry and hatred, and yet here some of us are, thinking that it's okay just so long as we're not the minority that's being the victim of it.

It's a nasty world we're living in right about now, and there are times when I feel ashamed of our community. It's time for us all to practise what we preach and be really inclusive, black-and-brown-striped rainbow flag or not.

David Brown, Wolverhampton (email address supplied)

Top 5 Viral

What ya talkin' about on social media?

1. Gay flag controversy

3. Trump's Military Transgender Ban

4. Thugs beat up gay couple for holding hands

2. Saving the Birmingham Gay Village

5. The Human League announced for Brum Pride

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NHS

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www.leicestersexualhealth.nhs.uk

Free, private and confidential sexual health checks for gay & bisexual men and men who have sex with men.

Day: Mondays
Time: 2 - 5pm (last appointment 4.45pm)
Place: 29 New Bond Street, LE1 4RQ

Splash Spa & Leisure

Day: Tuesdays
Time: 2 - 5pm (last appointment 4.45pm)
Place: 61 Bedford Street, LE1 3JR

Amigos Leisure

Day: Thursdays
Time: 2 - 5pm (last appointment 4.45pm)
Place: 30 Bedford Street South, LE1 3JR

TRADE

Time: 12 - 2pm (last appointment 1.45pm)
Place: 2nd Floor, 27 Bowling Green Street, LE1 6AS
You can also check out Trade Sexual Health
www.tradesexualhealth.com

10 YEARS AGO

A look back at Midlands Zone from February 2009

Boy George starts prison sentence for false imprisonment

Singer Boy George has begun his 15 month prison sentence after being found guilty of falsely imprisoning a male prostitute in his east London flat. According to reports, the fallen pop idol has been spending time sitting on a bed in his cell signing autographs for...

BOY GEORGE STARTS PRISON TERM

We completely forgot about this and we're sure Boy George would like us to forget about it again! Since his release, he's been a judge on The Voice UK, got back to making music and also does lots of DJing.

G-A-Y's previous home The Astoria closes for last time

The long time home of the legendary G-A-Y club night has finally closed its doors. London venue the Astoria closed for the last time on 15 January and is to be demolished in the next few months, a victim of London's changing transport requirements. The venue opened in 1927 and converted into a theatre in 1976. It will be torn down as part of the redevelopment of Tottenham Court Road station.

Commenting on the closure, Jeremy Joseph, who ran G-A-Y at the Astona, said: "G-A-Y and the Astona was a family home. I would [illegible] if the closure moved [illegible] "The [illegible] cross rail, [illegible] It should [illegible] the centre of [illegible] have for this [illegible] thorities."

ICONIC G-A-Y BUILDING GETS DEMOLISHED

The iconic Astoria in London built in 1927 and home to G-A-Y for many years was demolished to make way for Crossrail development which still hasn't opened!

10-year challenge:

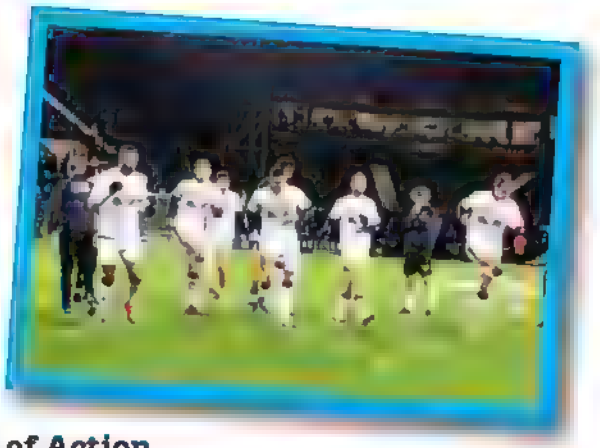
THIS MONTH:
DAVID NASH AKA DJ LOTTY

FEB 2009 FEB 2019

Scene photos from 2009

Recognise anyone? Let us know via emaileditor@midlandszone.co.uk and send us a picture of what they look like today, 10 years on!

Taking Pride in football



Back in late 2017, a group of LGBTQ West Bromwich Albion Football Club supporters came together to form Proud Baggies, a supporters group whose mission is to 'bring the football and LGBT+ communities together to celebrate diversity and increase LGBT+ visibility at West Bromwich Albion FC'.

February is Football v Homophobia Month of Action, so we checked in with Piero Zizzi, David Price and Steve Price of Proud Baggies to talk about the group and discuss homophobia in football...

Proud Baggies was set up by the group's Chair, Piero Zizzi, back in 2017. Since its inception, it's been nominated for numerous awards for the work that it's done

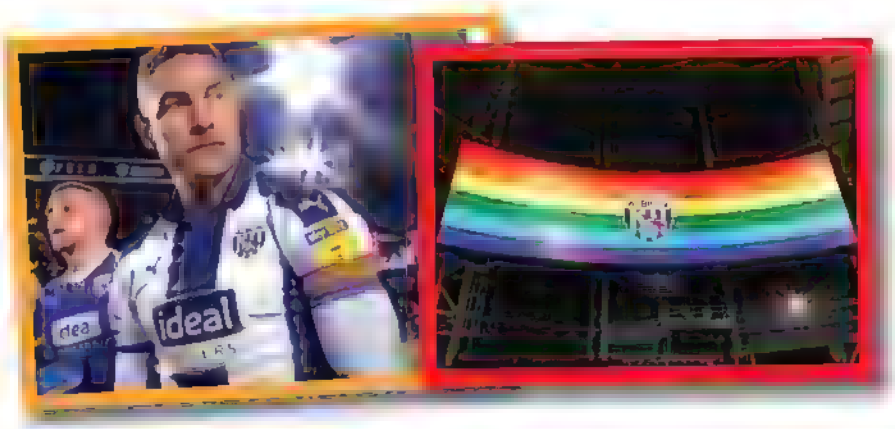
Piero comes from a sports background, works in the sports industry, and has had his own struggles: "I came out to my friends and family at the age of 18, but I didn't come out to my peers in the football industry until I was 25. The football industry is very macho and predominantly a very 'straight white male'-orientated industry

"I joined the committee of Pride In Football, which is an umbrella group of LGBT+ supporters groups. When I joined, there were about 20 LGBT supporters groups; now there's about 40. I found inspiration from these groups and realised there must be other LGBT+ Baggies supporters. I felt that a group like Proud Baggies was something our club needed."

"Piero is like Steve and myself," says David, the group's treasurer, "a lifelong West Bromwich Albion supporter. It was difficult for me to come to matches as a gay person. I have one other friend who's gay and supports the Albion. I've known him for about 20 years, but he lives in London, so I don't get to meet up with him at matches very often. That's where Proud Baggies comes in.

"There are a lot of LGBT people who support West Bromwich Albion, and this group has brought us all together. It's raising the profile of LGBT people in the game, and the football club have also been incredibly supportive and proud of what we've achieved."

Proud Baggies is one of the leading LGBT+ football fan groups in the country - no mean feat when you compare the size of West Bromwich Albion to large clubs like Tottenham Hotspur (whose LGBT+ group is called Proud Lilywhites).



Bridge The Gap

Over 50 isn't 'over the hill'. Find out why by bridging the gap between youth and experience.

Find out how at ageingwithpride.co.uk
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Ageing with Pride

Birmingham LGBT

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"Proud Baggies is all about inclusion. The club supports this and wants everyone to feel welcome. We're focusing on helping LGBT+ people feel included in football, while at the same time countering prejudice and discrimination. Sadly, we still have to challenge it because it still happens. It's not just homophobic words that you hear; you sometimes - rarely but sometimes - hear racism and anti semitism.

"Football is a very emotional game and a lot of people tend to leave their best behaviour behind. Everyone wants their team to win, and in the heat of the moment, people say things they don't mean. If a player isn't performing to his best, you may hear someone shout out, 'You f***ing poofter' for example, and that's something that needs to be challenged.

LGBT+ people should be able to come to football matches without hearing that sort of thing said."

Tackling homophobia at both a club level and a supporters level is something that's a top priority for Proud Baggies.

"One of our main objectives for the group was to have visibility," Piero explains. "A big thing this season was to have a Proud Baggies flag in the stands. It's there for everyone to see, to say that LGBT people are coming to the match and are welcome at the club.

"The club have been very supportive by putting out messages and signage to say that homophobia and other forms of discrimination won't be tolerated, and that sanctions will be put in place."

Kick It Out, a group that deals with abuse of all kinds in football, has released figures saying that homophobia in the game has increased by nine per cent.

"I'm not sure whether that means homophobia is growing or people are just more comfortable in reporting it because of the rise of LGBT+ visibility and supporters groups," says Piero.

When Proud Baggies was first launched back in 2017, the reaction from West Bromwich Albion supporters was largely positive. There were, however, a few negative remarks, predominantly on Facebook: "We learned quickly that we were going to get some negative feedback," says Piero. "But on the flip side, there was self policing from our own fans, reminding those who'd written the negative comments that West Bromwich Albion as a club has a history of great diversity

> "The club have been very supportive... **HOMOPHOBIA** and other forms of discrimination **won't be tolerated**"

"The Baggies had three of the first black players in British football. This club has broken down barriers for so many years, and we're proud that they're still doing it now, especially with the LGBT+ community."

Proud Baggies features a diverse group of members: "It's fun!" says Steve. "There's a great group of people, and we talk about anything. Obviously, we support Albion first and foremost, but the topic of conversation can very quickly flick from football to gay icons. It really is that diverse and funny."

Each year, LGBT+ charity Stonewall works with football clubs across the UK to promote LGBT+ inclusion in the game via their Rainbow Laces campaign - and West Bromwich Albion went all out with their fixture against Brentford on Monday 3 December, a match that finished one-all.

Players warmed up on the pitch in Proud Baggies t-shirts and wore rainbow laces in their boots. Rainbow flags were displayed on the stadium's giant screens, and even club mascots Baggie Bird and Boiler Man got involved.

So is the football industry as a whole missing any tricks? Is there more that could be done?

"I think it's definitely moving in the right direction," says Piero. "The rise of LGBT supporters groups alone proves that there's been a big shift over the last few years."

And big campaigns such as Rainbow Laces and Football v Homophobia further improve the LGBT+ community's visibility in football.

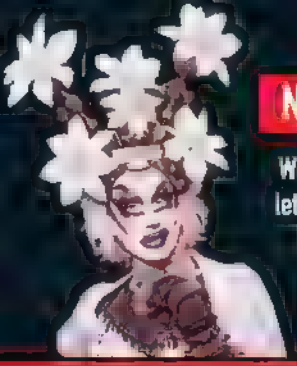
"It's definitely making things easier, and it's continuing to improve. We still don't have an 'out' elite male footballer, but I think it's coming.

I just think we need the right support network in place. There will be gay footballers out there, and if they're out there playing, look to the stands and see their club has an LGBT+ supporters group and there's a rainbow flag flying, then that's going to help give them the courage to be themselves."

For more information about Proud Baggies, visit their website, proudbaggies.com

For more information about this month's Football v Homophobia Month of Action - a campaign that exists to challenge discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender identity and expression at all levels in football - visit footballvhomophobia.com

If you experience any form of discrimination at a football match, report it at kickitout.org or to the club itself.



NEW!

Would you let TWIGGY be your agony aunt?

Rock and Roll Bingo

LAUNCH NIGHT IN BRUM!

Red, Amber, Green! TRAFFIC LIGHT PARTY at Bar Diva

Valentine's celebrations with KYLIE at The Yard

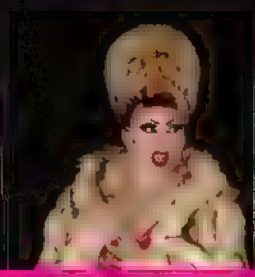
SCENE

Your guide to the month ahead on the GAY SCENE

MO at the Gale

What's On

AROUND THE MIDLANDS GAY SCENE



Brenda LaBeau

Monday 4 Feb
Havana Republic, Shrewsbury

Danny Beard

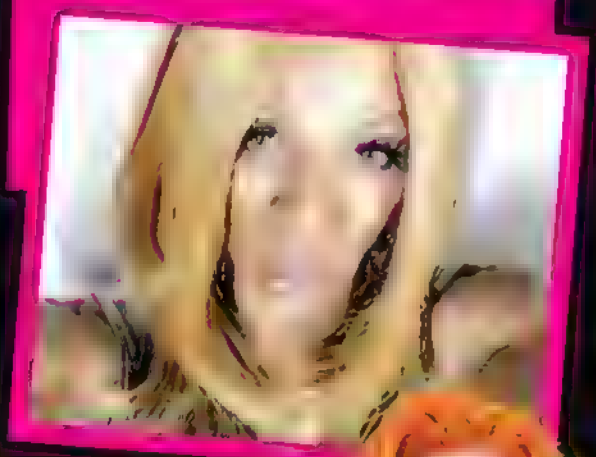
Britain's Got Talent star Danny Beard returns to Birmingham's award winning Eden Bar this month - not once, but twice! Danny's certainly become one of the city's favourite drag acts in recent years, so if you still haven't seen him, make sure you head down to Eden. You won't regret it!

Saturday 8 and Thursday 14 February
Eden Bar, Birmingham

Boyonce on stage + Amy La Queefa

[illegible] hosted by Amy La Queefa.

Sunday 17 February, Missing Bar, Birmingham



Party with Marty

Birmingham drag legend Marty Smith is popping up all over the Midlands this month. She'll be serving up her usual delightful dose of fun, games and naughty antics at the following venues:

Friday 1 February at The Yard, Coventry
Friday 15 February at The Village Inn, Birmingham

Return of the Mac

Scottish drag queen Mary Mac heads to Birmingham's for her regular time to shine at the end of the month. She'll be joined by DJ Toni Lee for a night of glorious fun in a fantastic party atmosphere.

Saturday 23 February
Eden Bar, Birmingham

Mids Bears

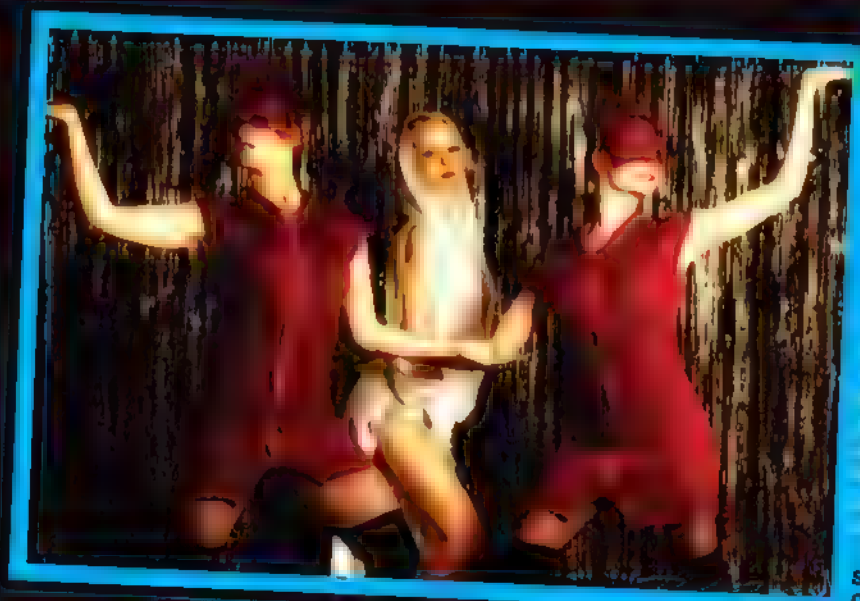
Friday 15 Feb
Eden Bar
Birmingham

Sum Ting Wong

Friday 1 Feb
Village Inn
Birmingham

Shania Pain

Monday 18 Feb
Havana Republic
Shrewsbury



KYLIE ON SHOW TRIBUTE

Saturday 16 February at The Yard, Coventry

Miss Penny live!

Another great cabaret act comes to kep you entertained this month! Everyone's favourite, Miss Penny, will be live on stage, entertaining the masses with her super-fantastic act. If you haven't seen her yet, be sure to pop along - she's fab!

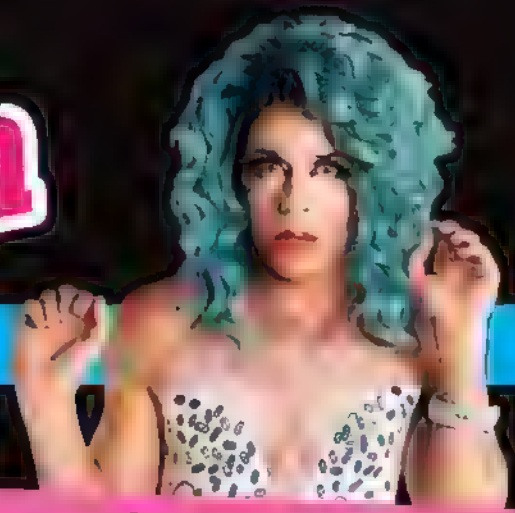
Friday 8 February at The Village Inn, Birmingham
Friday 15 February at The Yard, Coventry

Double Fanny Burns

[illegible] live on stage

Friday 8 February at The Yard, Coventry
Saturday 9 February at Eden, Birmingham

What's On



AURA JAY

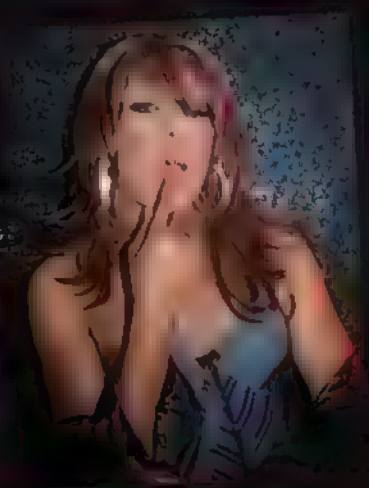
Hot from the south coast Aura Jay brings her killer heals and 'belting' tunes to the Midlands this month Catch her at The Yard,Coventry, for some raunchy one-liners and iconic anthems - all hosted by Coventry regular Rockella.

Friday 22 February
The Yard, Coventry

This month head down to Birmingham's biggest The Nightingale Club, where you can catch MOBO Awards nominated M O The R&B trio return to the The Gale all geared up and ready to get Brummies on the dance floor, with bangers Bad Vibe and Wondering Catch 'em

Saturday 23 February
Nightingale Club, Birmingham

Sandra London



The Whore of Hampstead Heath returns to the Midlands this month to get you in the party spirit. Performing all her favourites live on stage, Sandra will have The Village warmed up in no time at all!

Friday 22 February
The Village Inn, Birmingham

OTHER EVENTS INCLUDE:

Sat 2 Feb

Foam Party
Bar Diva, Dudley

Swedish Invasion
Gossip, Stoke-on-Trent

Miss Tish Ewe
Candi Canie's Cabaret Lounge, Cannock

Neon Party
The Flag, Worcester

Sun 3 Feb

Kitty Tray & Kitten T
The Crown Inn, Derby

Tues 12 Feb

LGBT History Month Pub Quiz
The Yard, Coventry

Wed 13 Feb

Live Jazz
The Loft, Birmingham

Thur 14 Feb

X Factor - Open Auditions
The Yard, Coventry

Sat 16 Feb

RuPaul All Stars 34 finale & quiz
Eden Bar, Birmingham

Traffic Light Party
Bar Diva, Dudley

Sun 17 Feb

Leather Social
Eden Bar, Birmingham

Sat 23 Feb

Club Scritches
Eden Bar, Birmingham

Thurs 28 Feb

Our Trace
Eden Bar, Birmingham

HAVANA ★ REPUBLIC

PRESENTS

Miss Penny's FABULOUS MONDAYS!

THE BIGGEST GAY MONDAY NIGHT OUT IN THE MIDLANDS

special guest cabaret nights

MON 14 FEB
BRENDA LA BEAU

MON 21 FEB
SHANIA PAIN

MON 7 MAR
VICKY JACKSON AS PINK

FREE ENTRY B4 12!

OPEN UNTIL 4AM!

GREAT £1 DRINKS

18 ABBEY FOREGATE, SHREWSBURY, SY2 6AE 01743 271821

GAY BARS & CLUBS IN THE MIDLANDS...

Birmingham

EDEN BAR

Sherlock St, B5 6NB
Tel: 0121 622 1953
theedenbar.co.uk
/eden.bar

EVERY TUESDAY 8PM
Rock and Roll Bingo with DJ Yogi

EVERY WEDNESDAY 8PM
Quizzical with DJ Yogi

EVERY FRIDAY & SUNDAY
Karaoke & Disco with DJ Nikki

EVERY SATURDAY
DJ Timi Lee

THE LOFT

12 Bromsgrove St,
B5 6RG
Tel: 0121 6222 444
theloftlounge.co.uk
/The-Loft-Lounge

FIRST MONDAY OF THE MONTH
Queeny's Quiz

EVERY MONDAY
Monday Cocktail Club
2 for £10

EVERY WEDNESDAY
Wing It Wednesday -
Kilo of wings and drink £10

MISSING BAR

Hurst St, B5 6NU
Tel: 0121 622 4256
missingbar.co.uk
/missingbar

EVERY MONDAY UNTIL 4AM
Ministry of Pound with DJ Mike Emery

EVERY TUESDAY
Karaoke with Gavina Vagina

EVERY THURSDAY 9PM
Throwback Thursdays with DJ Gavina

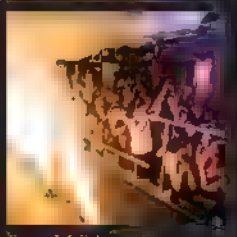
EVERY FRIDAY 9PM
Hit Mas and Her with DJ Mike Emery & Gavina Vagina

ALTERNATE SATURDAYS
Back to Back Saturdays with DJ Matty, DJ Mike Emery and host Twiggy

EVERY SUNDAY 8.30pm & 10.30pm
Double Cabaret with Amy LaQueefa

NIGHTINGALE CLUB

Kent St, B5 6RD
Tel: 0121 622 1718
nightingaleclub.co.uk
/thenightingaleclub



EVERY THURSDAY
Pounded! with £1 drinks all night

EVERY FRIDAY
Absolute Anthems with DJ's Carey Hadley and Scott Hilton

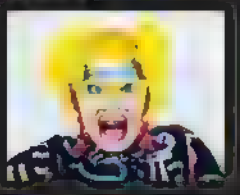
EVERY SATURDAY
Nightingale Saturdays with free entry until 12pm

THE VILLAGE INN

Hurst St, B5 4BD
Tel: 0121 622 4742
villagebirmingham.co.uk
/villageinnbirmingham

EVERY MONDAY 9PM
Bingo with Queeny

EVERY TUESDAY
Pick n Mix with Ginny Lemon + friends



EVERY WEDNESDAY
Karaoke with Charlotte the Harlotte

EVERY THURSDAY
Miss Marty + Miss Penny alternate weeks

EVERY SUNDAY
Yshee Black + special guests

PLUS THESE VENUES

BAR JESTER
Holloway Circus, B1 1EG
Tel: 0121 643 8344

BOLTZ CLUB
Lower Essex St, B5 6QP
Tel: 0121 666 6886

CLUB CHIC
28 Horsefair, B1 1DD
Tel: 0121 666 6806

THE CORE
Sherlock St, B5 6NB
Tel: 0121 622 2797

DEVILS KITCHEN
Kent St, B5 6NB

FOUNTAIN INN
Wrentham St, B5 6QL
Tel: 0121 622 1452

THE FOX
17 Lower Essex St,
B5 6SN Tel: 0121 622 3213

GLAMOROUS
27-35 Hurst St, B5 4BD
Tel: 0121 622 5812

SIDEWALK
Hurst Street, B5 6SE
Tel: 0121 666 6220

THE WELLINGTON
72 Bristol St, B5 7AH

Birmingham venues

Coventry

CANDI CAINE'S CABARET LOUNGE
3 Church Street, WS11 1DE

GLAMOROUS COVENTRY
88 Short St, CV1 2LX

THE YARD
11-12 Bull Yard, CV1 1LH
Tel: 02475 012 959
theyardcoventry.co.uk
/TheYardCoventry

EVERY TUESDAY
Jelly Cube quiz night

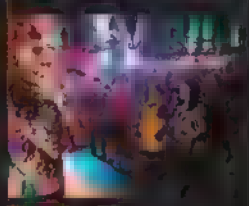
EVERY WEDNESDAY
Open mic night hosted by Tom Barnwell

EVERY THURSDAY 8PM
Free Shot Karaoke with Jupiter & Minerva

EVERY SATURDAY
DJ Richard Alexander with Jupiter and Minerva

EVERY SUNDAY
Bingo, Play Your Cards Right and Deal or No Deal with weekly cash prizes of over £100

BAR DIVA
76 Lower Plaza Mall, King Street, DY2 8NZ
/BarDivaThePlaceToBe



EVERY MONDAY
Manic Monday with Miss Annie

EVERY THURSDAY
Get Pounded Karaoke with Miss Annie

EVERY FRIDAY
Freaky Friday's with DJ Mikey

EVERY SATURDAY
Cabaret Saturdays with Miss Annie

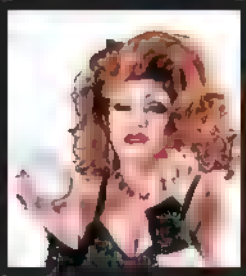
EVERY SUNDAY
Ring & Ride with Mo & Margaret

Gloucester

THE WESTGATE
Westgate Street, GL1 2NF
Tel: 01452 6900450

HAVANA REPUBLIC
18-21 Abbey Foregate, SY2 6AE
Tel: 01743 271821
havanarepublic.co.uk
/HavanaRepublic

EVERY MONDAY
Fabulous Mondays with Miss Penny and guest cabaret every 1st and 3rd Monday



THE PEACH TREE
18-21 Abbey Foregate
Tel: 01743 355055
thepeachtree.co.uk
/ThePeachTreeRestaurant

Stoke

GOSSIP
5 Hope Street, ST1 5BT
Tel: 07399 664955

PINK
93 Stafford Street, ST1 1LS
Tel: 01782 272772

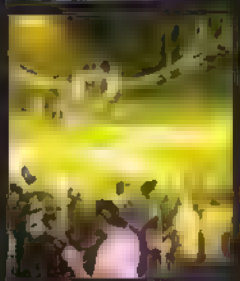
THREE FURNACES
30 Bridgnorth Rd, Madeley, TF7 4JB, 01952 58852

THE LION
Tel: 01922 610977

THE RED LION
Park St, WS1 1NW
Tel: 01922 637790

PRINCE ALBERT
Railway St WV1 1LG
Tel: 01902 540672

GORGEOUS
School St, WV1 4LF
Tel: 01902 427247
/gorgeousbar



EVERY SATURDAY 10PM
EGO Saturdays

Worcester

THE FLAG
50 Lowesmoor, WR1 2SG
Tel: 01905 780467

VELVET CLUB
Angel Row, WR1 3QN

Derby

THE CROWN INN
40 Curzon St, DE1 1LL
Tel: 01332 381742

DOVER CASTLE
34 Dover St, LE16PT
Tel: 0116 255 3052

HELSINKI
94 Rutland St, LE1 1SB

RAINBOW & DOVE
186 Charles St, LE1 1LA

VENOM
(YOLO) Gay every Wed
Belgrave Gate, LE1 3GR

Northampton

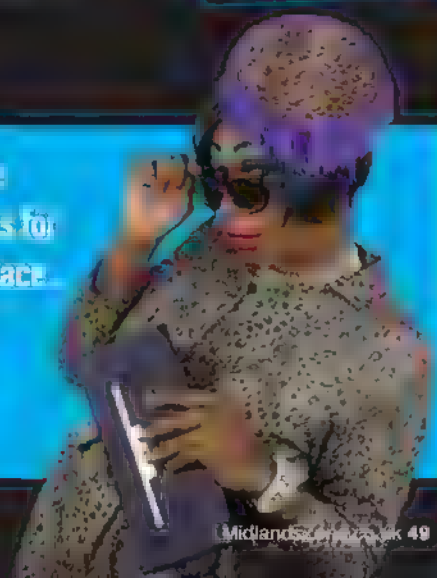
THE BOSTON
College St, NN1 2QP

LARGEST OVER 50,000 READERS EVERY MONTH
WITH THE UK'S BIGGEST REGIONAL LGBTQ MAGAZINE

NEXT MONTH'S ISSUE

Birmingham's Ashee Black will be giving us her top drag queen picks for the UK version of RuPaul's Drag Race...

RuPaul DRAG RACE



EDEN BAR

What a great night with the sensational Mary Mac – and she's back again on Sat 23rd Feb too!

Eden have another great line-up this month (see opposite) – and apart from all the fabulous cabaret, it's worth checking out their brand NEW Rock and Roll Bingo with DJ Yogi every Tuesday night!

Plus their comedy night is back by popular demand with 'Our Trace' on Thurs 28 Feb – after all we could do with a bloody good laff!

Eden Guv'nors – Garry and Cal

QUIZZICAL!
The smartphone
QUIZ
WEDNESDAYS 8PM
WITH DJ YOGI SpeedQuizzing

KARAOKE & DISCO
EVERY FRIDAY & SUNDAY
WITH DJ NIKKI

FEBRUARY
eden

Rock and Roll Bingo™
EVERY TUES 8pm
NOT JUST BINGO! A FUN-FILLED INTERACTIVE NIGHT WITH PRIZES AND SURPRISES!
HOSTED BY DJ YOGI

SAT 2nd — DANNY BEARD
SAT 9th — FANNY BURNS
THUR 14th — DANNY BEARD
FRI 15th — MIDS BEARS
SAT 16th — RU-PAUL All Stars Season 4 finale & Quiz
SUN 17th — LEATHER SOCIAL
SAT 23rd — CLUB SCRITCHES
SAT 23rd — MARY MAC
THUR 28th — OUR TRACE!

Sat. Afternoon
clubscritches.co.uk

COMEDY NIGHT!
Back by popular demand the naughty lady herself Our Trace. It's free entry so reserve your tables

DJ TONI LEE
SAT 9th & SAT 23rd

DJ PONI
SAT 2nd & SAT 16th

DJ NIKKI
FRI & SUN

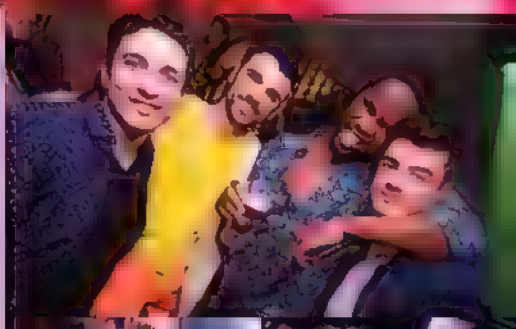
EVERY FRI & SUN KARAOKE & DISCO WITH DJ NIKKI

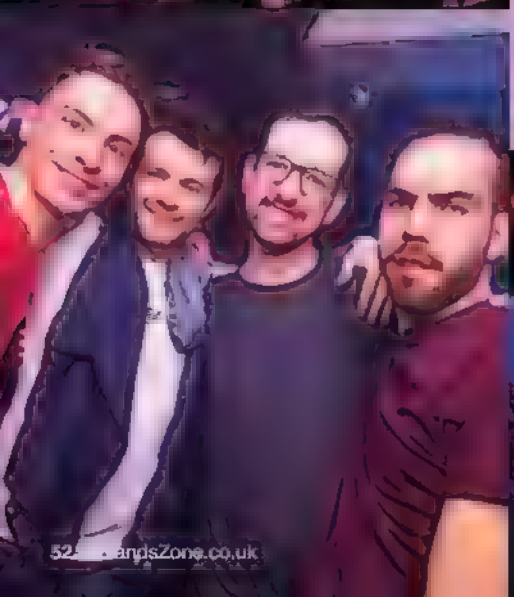
Open from 4pm Mon-Fri 2pm Sat & Sun | 116 Sherlock St. Birmingham, B5 6NB | 0121 622 1953 | www.TheEdenBar.co.uk

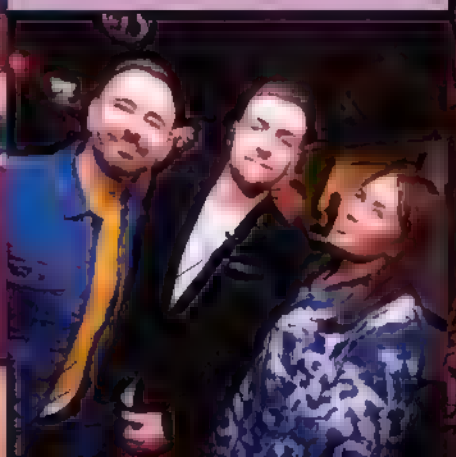
THE VILLAGE INN

If the pictures from the Village Inn's NYE Re-run Party are anything to go by, you know you're in for one hell of a good time whenever you visit the venue. February will see Freaky Fridays filled with some of our favourite queens (see opposite).

Other weekly highlights include Queeny's Bingo on Monday nights, which now includes £1 drinks UNTIL 4AM!







FRIDAY 1ST FEB
SUM TING WONG
FRIDAY 8TH FEB
MISS PENNY
FRIDAY 15TH FEB
MISS MARTY
FRIDAY 22ND FEB
SANDRA
MONDAYS
QUEENYS BINGO
GUARANTEED
£120
WEEKLY
NEW NEW NEW
L8R MONDAYS
£1 DRINKS
UNTIL 4AM
TUESDAYS
PICK N MIX
WITH
GINNY LEMON
BLANCHE
WEDNESDAYS
KARAOKE
WITH
CHARLOTTE THE
HARLOTTE
THURSDAYS
MISS MARTY
MISS PENNY
SUNDAYS
BLACK
FEBRUARY
THE VILLAGE INN
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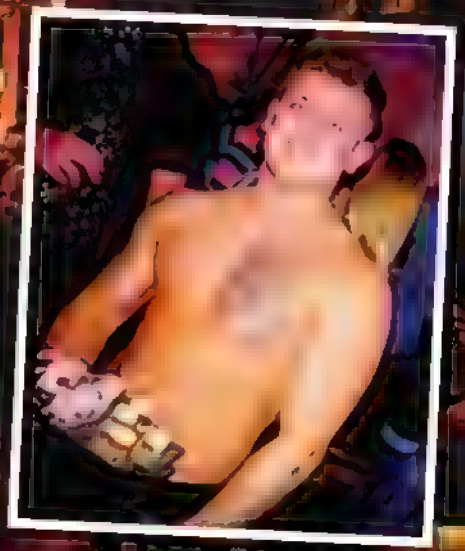
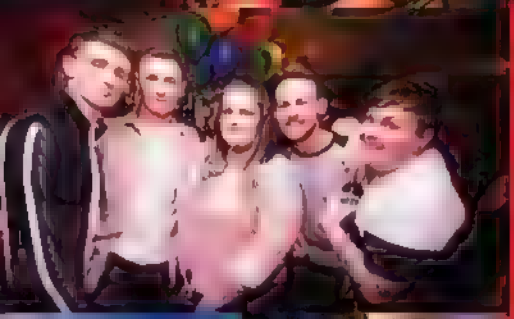
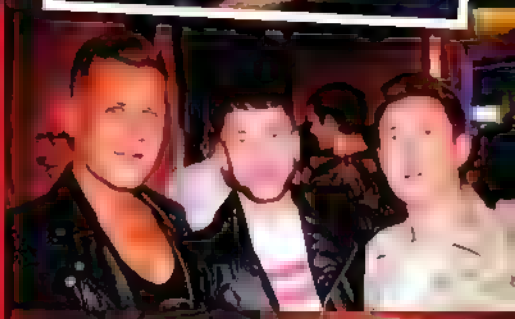
VILLAGEINNBIRMINGHAM
@VILLAGEBRUM
THEVILLAGEBIRMINGHAM

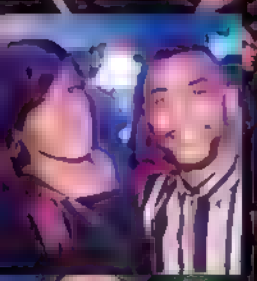


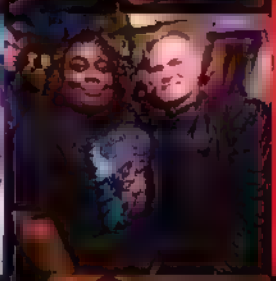
MISSING
BIRMINGHAM

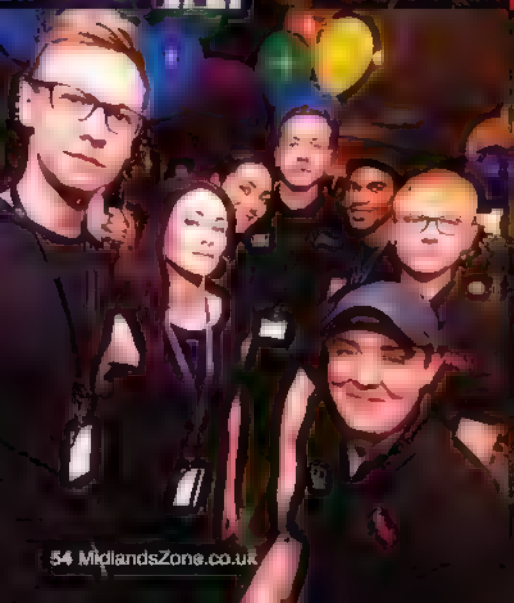
With something happening every night of the week, from Ministry of Pound with DJ Mike Emery on Mondays to Throwback Thursdays with DJ Gavina, Missing is one of the busiest venues in Birmingham's Gay Village'
This month, celebrate Valentine's weekend with the Queen B herself, as Beyonce joins Amy LaQueefa for a saucy Sunday special – and it's free entry as always'

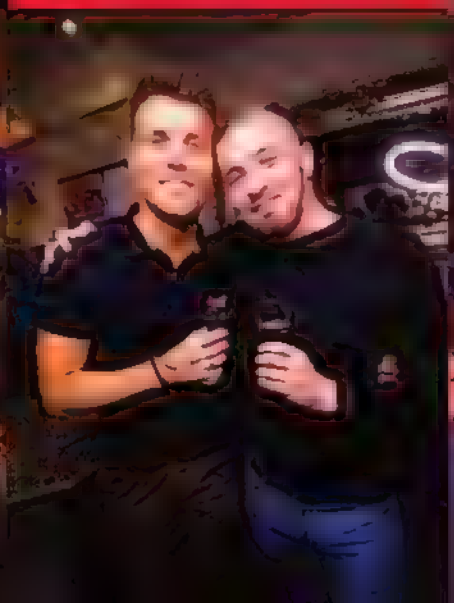


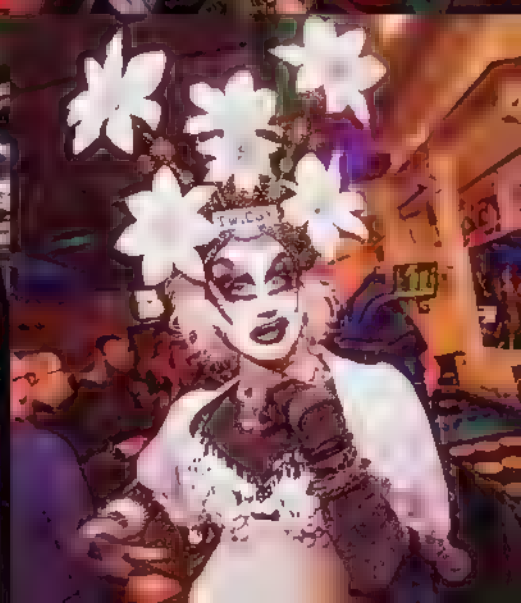












BOYONCÉ

Valentines

GET STEAMY WITH
AMY LAQUEEFA AND BOYONCE

SUNDAY 17TH FEBRUARY

SHOWTIMES 9PM & 10.30PM

Missing

THE NIGHTINGALE

BIRMINGHAM

Chart topper Mabel headed to The Nightingale for their biggest NYE Re-run party yet. With ten DJs, drag queens, club kids and pyrotechnics, its no wonder the club was absolutely jam-packed!

After the huge success of their singles "Bad Vibe" and "Wondering" the girl squad M O will be taking to the Nightingale's stage once more on Sat 23 Feb.

NYE
Chart topper Mabel stormed the Gale

THE YARD

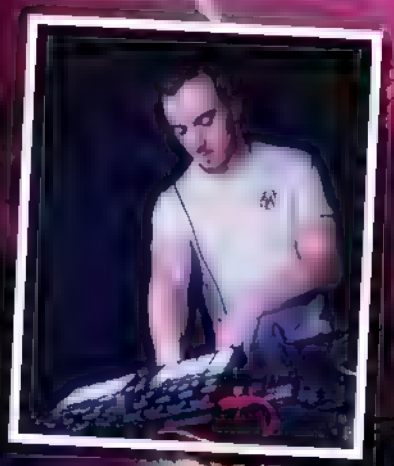
COVENTRY

The Yard hosts the finest acts on the local cabaret scene every Friday night. January saw the wonderful Mary Golds give Coventry a show to remember.

while this month it's the turn of Miss Marty and Fanny Burns to grace the club's stage (see opposite).

The Yard will also be celebrating V'day in style, with the number one Kylie tribute on Sat 16 Feb. You can expect all of Kylie's biggest hits, Especially For You...

the yard
FEBRUARY
Cabaret
EVERY FRIDAY
1ST MISS MARTY
8TH FANNY BURNS
15TH MISS PENNY
22ND AURAJ
HOSTED BY ROCKIELLA
Weekly
TUESDAY
Quiz
WEDNESDAY
THURSDAY
PARTY NIGHT
SATURDAY
SUNDAY
Valentines
KYLIE
TRIBUTE
FEBRUARY 16TH
THE YARD, 11-12 BULL YARD, COVENTRY. CV1 1LH WWW.THEYARDCOVENTRY.CO.UK



GORGEOUS

WOLVERHAMPTON

Home to one of Wolverhampton's busiest club nights, Gorgeous hosts Ego every Saturday night from 11pm till 6am

With a mashup of commercial R&B, chart-toppers, anthems, house & bass, there's something for everyone.

Students can also get 20% off entry and drinks with a valid student ID card.

gorgeous
THURSDAY 1-6AM | FRIDAY & SATURDAY 11PM-6AM
2 BARS | VIP BOOTHS | VIP LOUNGE
KEEPING
WOLVERHAMPTON
OUT!
OFFICIALLY THE MIDLANDS BEST GAY NIGHTCLUB! (MIDLANDS ZONE AWARDS)
WWW.GORGEOUSCLUB.CO.UK
FACEBOOK /GORGEOUSNIGHTCLUB TWITTER @GORGEOUSWTON
GORGEOUS, SCHOOL STREET, WOLVERHAMPTON, WV1 4LF. 01902 771122

BAR DIVA

DUDLEY

January was another jam-packed month at Bar Diva - and included a visit from the one and only Charlie Hides! Saturday at Bar Diva is all about the cabaret with the club's Miss Annie hosting - expect top drag acts and a night full of fun!

This month sees the club host its very own Traffic Light Party (see opposite) on Sat 16 Feb - so don your green, amber or red and get ready to mingle!

BAR DIVA! FEBRUARY

TRAFFIC LIGHT PARTY

FREE & SINGLE
IT'S COMPLICATED
ATTACHED

SATURDAY 16TH FEBRUARY

THURSDAY'S — GET POUNDED KARAOKE WITH MISS ANNIE

FRIDAY'S — FREAKY FRIDAY'S WITH DJ MIKEY

SATURDAY'S — CABARET SATURDAY'S TOP DRAGS & HOSTED BY MISS ANNIE

SUNDAY'S — RING & RIDE FUN, GAMES AND PRIZES WITH MISS MO BILITY AND MARGARET

MONDAY'S — MANIC MONDAY BOGOF KARAOKE WITH MISS ANNIE HAPPY HOUR 9-1AM

BAR DIVA

AWARD WINNER

Lower Plaza Mall King Street DY2 8NZ Dudley

Hookups =
SQUIRT
.org
SQUIRT
.org
SQUIRT
Visit www.squirt.org
to hook up today

THE LOFT

BIRMINGHAM

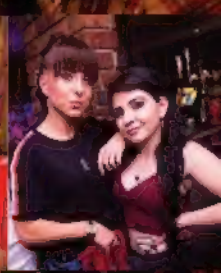
With craft beers, contemporary cocktails, locally sourced food menu, speciality gins and a fully heated garden in the heart of Birmingham, what's not to love about The Loft?:

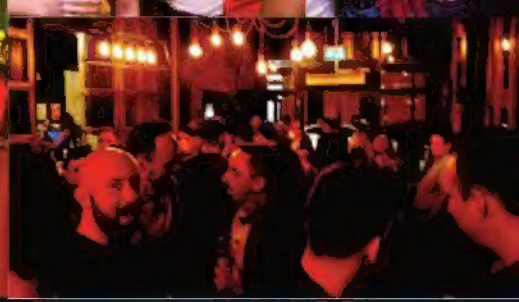
UPCOMING SPECIAL EVENTS:

13th Feb: Monthly Jazz at the Loft

14th Feb: Valentine's Day

16th Feb: Beyonce Special





Part of What's On MEDIA GROUP

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Dear Twiggy

GETTING TO THE ~~HEART~~ heartless OF THE MATTER

Obsession with Garden of Eden

I've gone off sex with my boyfriend, and I'm finding it hard to get an erection now. The only way I can sort of get in the mood is by thinking about that guy from Eden, Garry Prentice. I'm 26, my boyfriend is 42, and we're engaged. I've never spoken to Garry, but I can't stop thinking about him, and I'm worried it will affect how I feel about my fiance.
How can I get this man out of my head?

TWIGGY: We all get erections thinking of forbidden fruit and the snake in the garden of Eden. Read Genesis 3:1-24

Infatuation with Miss Penny

I'm infatuated with drag queens and think I'm particularly in love with Miss Penny. To try and get her out of my mind, I've even tried thinking she's just a Greggs sausage roll, but that doesn't seem to work either - I feel I just want to nibble away at her even more.
I'm 24, happily engaged to my boyfriend, and feel like I'm cheating on him. Every time I see Miss Penny's social media posts, my heart skips a beat! What should I do?

TWIGGY: I prescribe two sausage rolls a day for three weeks. By the end of this treatment, your clothes will no longer fit, but the sight of her will make you vomit - which is the more natural reaction.

Is three a crowd?

Ever since I saw that interview in the Zone a couple of months ago about the local throuple, I've been having sexy dreams about it, imagining what it would be like for my boyfriend and I to invite a third person into our relationship.
I've asked around - I even asked the postman - but they look at me as if I'm demented. I really want to try it, and I think having a third will help with things like doing the washing-up too. Is there a better way I can go about it?

TWIGGY: Darling, by the sound of it you should be doing your searching online - without a face pic. Grindr, Scruff, Deliveroo, take your pick...

Mummy Feed Me!

I've been breastfeeding my girlfriend for almost a year, and I just can't carry on living this way.
It all began when my son was born last year, and I decided to breastfeed my baby. My long-term girlfriend joked, 'I'd like some too', and I stupidly agreed, but now I wish I'd said no.
It's getting out of hand now and feels so wrong. She keeps saying, 'Mummy feed me', and is getting quite rough with me - my nipples hurt so much. When I say it can't go on any longer, she just breaks down and cries like a baby, screaming 'Mummy!'
How can I stop this?

TWIGGY: Forget love or loyalty, give them an udder each - whoever feels the best is the winner.

Bigger boobs

Will playing with my breasts make them bigger? My girlfriend insists it will. She's 26, I'm 19, and she's forever fondling my boobs to see if her theory works. I personally don't think there's any truth in it, and I really wouldn't mind them having a rest. What should I do?

TWIGGY: If you want bigger boobs, shaddap and enjoy. If not, when she molests you, tell her that her dad has a nicer touch...

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